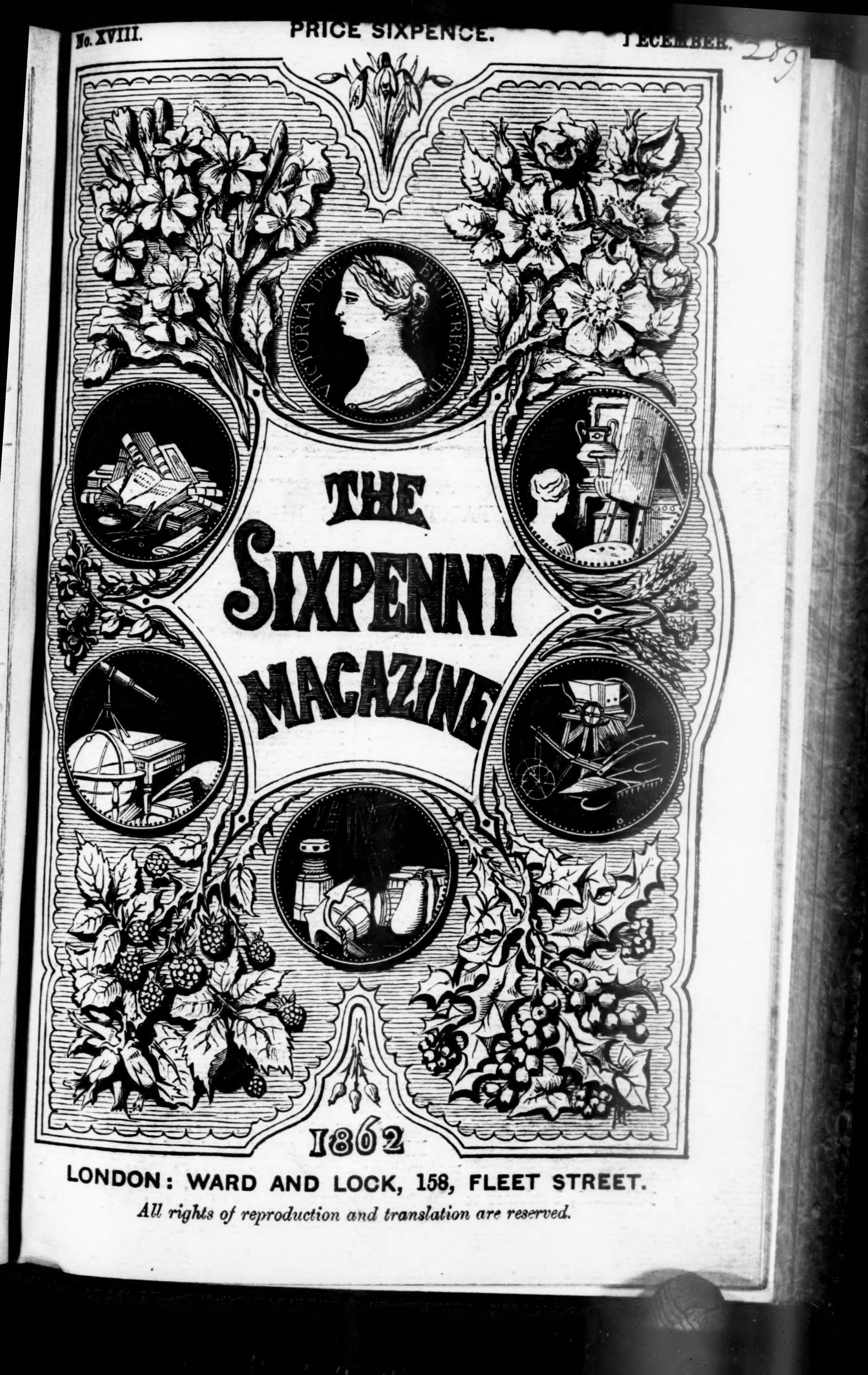


No. XVIII.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

DECEMBER.

289



THE SIXPENNY MAGAZINE

1862

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THE STORK'S NEST.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STORK'S NECKLACE.

FOR a long time afterwards Frantz still looked at that part of the horizon where the boat would entirely disappear, but by degrees he turned away from the splendour of the river to look upon the Castle of Steinberg.

Frantz, leaning with his elbows on the wooden balcony, examined those thick walls which concealed from his sight all that was dear to him, but the inexorable and gloomy building guarded the secret of events, perhaps taking place at the very moment within it.

No face could be distinguished between the loopholes which served as windows for the side looking upon the landscape. Always the same silence, the same motionless position of Steinberg and its environs; the storks alone still hovered about in the air at the base of the tower.

The student's eyes mechanically followed their evolutions. Sometimes they appeared to fall upon the earth with the rapidity of an arrow, at others, to soar into the very clouds; then they would in their playfulness light upon the chimneys, upon the towers, or the level roof of Steinberg.

"Happy birds," said Frantz, sighing. "With their wings, perhaps, they can touch the window of Wilhelmina's chamber; they can hear a sigh from her mouth, a sound from her sweet voice. Oh, that I had wings too, to take me near Wilhelmina!"

And silent tears rolled down his face.

"But their omens are false," he continued, after a pause; "when these birds of favourable augury re-appeared at the old manor after twenty-five years' absence, the friends of the family announced that its prosperity would revive. Even I, for an instant, believed myself the instrument God had chosen to raise up this fallen house. Vain belief, ridiculous superstition! worthy of the poor old woman who has preserved the recollection of it."

Whilst he was yet speaking a human form was seen suddenly to appear behind the battlements of the tower. From his tall figure, his strongly-marked features, it was easy to recognise—even from the distance where Frantz stood—the Baron de Steinberg. Henry held in his hand a

carbine, which he quickly put to his shoulder.

The noise of the explosion could not be heard, but a wreath of white smoke curling upwards showed that the baron had fired. It was easy to see that one of the storks dropped its wing—it was wounded.

This event, so simple in appearance, caused great emotion to Frantz in his present state of mind.

"Thus, then," said Frantz, "this man without pity has imagined that even these birds of good omen have deceived him. He wishes to avenge himself for their insolent joy, and now must he punish an innocent bird for the faults of his fortune."

The stork continued to drop lower and lower, till it alighted on the stone parapet; the baron observed with anxiety the effect of his cruel act.

The bird tried to place himself upon the top of the tower, then to get to the massive brickwork where its nest was built, but its strength got more and more exhausted, and it could not reach this haven.

The other stork, dismayed, flew round and round its companion, sometimes beneath it, as if to arrest his uncertain fall. Useless efforts! the unfortunate bird descended, still descended, sustained, rather carried along, by its blood-stained wings.

It soon reached the base of the tower, but it looked as if it wished to get farther away from a building now become so inhospitable, for making one last and vigorous effort with its wings, it eventually struggled to where the reeds grew thick and shady on the bank of the Rhine.

Henry de Steinberg did not leave his elevated position, but a projection of the rock had hidden the bird from his sight at the base of the tower. He leaned over, looking right and left to ascertain where the poor stork had fallen; then he returned, making a sign with his hand.

Another man ran after him, whom Frantz instantly recognised as Fritz Reutner. The major pointed with his fingers to the reeds, and both disappeared; the platform above became as solitary as before.

Frantz did not for a moment lose sight of the innocent victim of Baron de Steinberg. Hidden by an angle of the balcony, so that he could not be seen from the

castle, he saw the wounded stork flapping about in the reeds, and advancing rapidly to his side, as if to ask for assistance. Certainly Fritz, perhaps the major himself, would come to seize the bird; for this animosity against a beautiful and useless creature seemed inexplicable, and it could not escape the pursuit of its enemies.

Frantz recollects now, that Wilhelmina, without partaking completely the innocent belief of Madeleine, had manifested a sort of veneration for these storks; he at once determined to protect anything that Wilhelmina loved.

He soon reached the place where the poor stork lay wounded. It was fluttering about in the still water, and Frantz did not hesitate a second in going in to secure it; whether stunned by its fall, or enfeebled by its wound, it neither attempted to defend itself nor to escape. The student took it up carefully in his arms, and rapidly regained his room without meeting any one by the way.

When he placed the captive in safety on the floor, he ran to the balcony. Major Steinberg had returned to the embrasure of the battlement; he made signs to Fritz Reutner, who slowly descended the rock, looking about him on every side. The other stork flew round Fritz; like him, it seemed to be seeking for its faithful and unfortunate mate.

The student went close to the wounded bird, sure that he had not been perceived during his short excursion. The stork had not moved from the place where he had left it; familiar with men, the sight of Frantz did not appear to frighten it; it seemed as if a secret instinct told it of the good intentions of its protector.

He raised it up. Guided by the spots of blood which stained the plumage of the innocent creature, he carefully examined its wounds. Some grains of shot had struck it, but without apparently penetrating the vital organs. Frantz had no difficulty in extracting them, then he washed the wounds with water.

This simple dressing had a wonderful effect; the bird soon raised its drooping head and stood upon its red feet, stretched out its undulatory neck, and gently unfolded its wings as if to try their strength. It made no effort to escape. Soon after it became again motionless, and placing itself opposite Frantz, it looked at him in a fixed, melancholy manner.

Then the student noticed among the long floating feathers which ornamented

the stork's neck, a sort of necklace hardly visible.

By this sign, as well as a certain bending in its leg, he recognised the hinkende, that mysterious bird which had been the favourite of the baron's grandfather.

Frantz, yielding to an irresistible curiosity, took hold of this curious amulet. The hinkende, always grave and motionless, made no objection.

It consisted of a thin sheet of lead rolled upon itself, so as to close up exactly, in small bulk, a piece of paper or stuff; it was suspended by a small steel chain, which the long oily feathers had protected from rust, for the young man had scarcely touched it when it fell to pieces in his hand.

He then examined, not without a little nervousness, the object which had fallen so strangely into his keeping. When the lead was broken, he found a little square slip of parchment carefully rolled up; the metallic envelope had completely preserved it from wet, and the words which he found written upon it were still very distinct.

This, however, was only a small rough plan, evidently done in haste; at the bottom were the baron's signature, and these words also written by him—

"The Flucht-weg of Steinberg."

Frantz reflected for a moment.

"The Flucht-weg!" he murmured; "is not this the mysterious subterranean passage which to this day exists under the castle, and a knowledge of which is confined to the head of the family? Yes, yes! and Madeleine relates some frightful stories about this gloomy place, whilst she is ignorant where it is situated. Now the cruel conduct of the major towards this poor bird is explained. Baron de Steinberg, doubtless, knowing from tradition that his grandfather Hermann had confided to the hinkende this precious information, wished, by killing the stork, to secure it. I alone, of all the world, at present possess the secret of the family of Steinberg."

Whilst he spoke the stork still maintained that grave and, so to speak, meditative attitude peculiar to its species. It was perfectly motionless; you might have believed it was dead; but it looked so expressively, so ardently at Frantz, that he almost trembled.

The impressionable mind of Frantz, shaken by so many recent trials, was more accessible to superstition than at another time.

"Do you wish me to believe," said he, in a wandering manner, "that this secret belongs to me? Am I in the presence of a supernatural being, or of a poor bird, the blind instrument of the Divine will? Ought I to believe that the real head of the family of Steinberg, persecuting you cruelly, you have desired to entrust to me this secret, for the happiness of this ancient race whom you protect? Am I then called upon to regenerate—to build it up in the future? Alas! I can do nothing for it—I can do nothing for myself!"

Frantz trembled, his hair almost stood on end, his forehead was wet with perspiration, as if he was in the presence of a ghost. Pale and breathless, his eyes fixed upon the stork, he appeared as if waiting for its answer.

The hinkende, no longer impassable, unrolled its long silvery neck, clapped its bill two or three times, and turning gravely round, walked deliberately towards the open window. He mounted on the balcony, then stretching out his large wings, he suddenly took flight and disappeared.

After all, there was perhaps nothing more simple than this singular scene: the bird was first stunned, and the quietness it exhibited when it was handled could explain the torpor caused by its fall; refreshed by the attention of Frantz, reanimated by rest, its instinct of liberty was awakened, and it flew away.

But the superstitious imagination of Frantz did not allow him, at least to-day, to take things naturally; he attributed to a Higher Power an intervention to make the secret known to him. The stork appeared to him to have obeyed some super-human influence, so he remained for some minutes seated on his chair, thoughtfully swinging his arms, as if he was in doubt whether what he had just witnessed was a reality.

He was drawn away from this state of torpor by the voice of Albert Schwartz, who called to him from the next room. Frantz quickly concealed the piece of parchment—the stork's gift, as he called it—and Albert entered the room.

CHAPTER XX.

NEWS FROM THE CASTLE.

"By the blade of my sword," cried he, "now that you are up again you will see something new."

"What is it, Albert?"

"Our cousin, Major de Steinberg, plays with iron-bars above there, on the platform of his old tower. God pardon me, I should like to be one of the party."

"The major!—what say you about the major?"

"Come and see," replied the student, walking towards the balcony; "for more than five minutes he is up to the same game."

They saw him, in fact, passing backwards and forwards rapidly behind the battlements; his movements were wild and wandering; from time to time he raised his clenched fist towards the sky in a menacing, defiant manner. All his rage manifested itself to them in this pantomimic manner.

"What can agitate him so much?" said Frantz; "it cannot be from his unsuccessful attempt against—"

"That which agitates him so," replied Albert, thoughtlessly, "it is very easy to understand, if what they say of him is true."

"And what do they say, Albert?"

"That Baron de Steinberg is only mad—raving mad. It is exceedingly dangerous, they say, to go near him."

It must not be forgotten that Sigismund had concealed from the student his fears on the subject of the baron; so Frantz became faint on hearing this news.

"Could it be possible!—the poor Wilhelmina shut up with him in this inaccessible castle. But nonsense," he continued, "we must not believe the twaddle of the peasants in this idle village. And you, Albert, you are wrong to repeat these absurdities. The baron may be excited by his unbridled passions without his reason being affected; he is too persevering in his projects and his hatred."

"You are at liberty to doubt this news; still, that brute, Fritz Reutner, is not as mute with the fellows about here as with us. He said to Juncker the boatman, a friend of mine, that this mad De Steinberg keeps them all in terror at the tower; he keeps them under lock and key, watches them day and night, so that no communication can be held from without. At any moment this madman, in one of his fits, might strangle them for his own amusement."

"And Wilhelmina!—did they speak of her?"

"Fritz did not care to speak of her, shaking his head awfully when her name

was mentioned. He told them that the baron in an excess of madness—”

“Major de Steinberg would then be a wild beast,” cried Frantz, in despair. “Still you deceive yourself, Albert—you must deceive yourself; Wilhelmina can have nothing to fear from her brother. Why should he take such extraordinary care of her, if he nourished evil designs against her? Fritz has exaggerated the conduct of the baron.”

“Look!” exclaimed Albert, with a touch of sarcasm, touching Frantz’s shoulder with one hand, whilst he pointed with the other to the tower.

A new personage appeared upon the platform; it was Fritz Reutner. Fritz no doubt was about to give an account of his fruitless search; but the major, at the sight, became outrageous, for, throwing himself upon the son of Madeleine, he struck him with both his fists, and set upon him with fearful violence. In his anger, always increasing, he seized the unfortunate domestic, and dragged him towards the parapet, as if to pitch him into the abyss.

Fritz defended himself; but whether from stupid devotion to his master he dared not use all his strength, whether the vigour of his master was redoubled by his disease, he lost his footing, and soon he was on his back upon the parapet. Vainly he clung to the battlement; nothing sustained him from the gulf beneath but the convulsively clutched hand of the ferocious De Steinberg.

The two students called out, but it was unheard in the immensity of the Rhine. Frantz turned away his eyes to prevent him from seeing this mortal, inevitable fall.

Madeleine Reutner appeared behind, and ran towards him, her hair dishevelled, her arms raised. Such was the energy of this mother in despair, that the maniac turned round his head as if hesitating to consummate his crime. Fritz profited by this moment of hesitation: by one of those supreme efforts which gives the instinct of life, he seized the stone of the parapet and leaped beyond it. Then all the personages retired, and the platform was again deserted.

“Vexation in losing the stork was the cause of this outburst,” said Frantz. “Yes, there is no longer cause to doubt that his mind wanders; but then, how to snatch Wilhelmina from the hands of this fanatic?”

“Oh, the case is not embarrassing.

We must find the burgomaster of the canton, and lay the case before him. The law must be brought to bear upon the castle; it will not be difficult to ascertain the state of the baron, to judge from what we have just seen.”

Frantz reflected.

“No,” said he; “this would be a long, formal plan, and might do no good to poor Wilhelmina. I shall try another with which God has miraculously furnished me. I shall this night even penetrate the tower of Steinberg, and will carry off Wilhelmina. Albert, you shall accompany me.”

“I put a foot in that old frightful ruin, to see that sorcerer of a major! You might just as well propose to me to go to the infernal regions, and speak to his Satanic majesty. This giant De Steinberg, and his villainous wild boar Fritz, would only make a mouthful of both of us. Thank God, Frantz, you cannot complain of me being a bad comrade, or a man without heart. I have given you proofs enough of my devotion, of my courage, since we were buried, Sigismund and I, in this country, leaving the whole university in mourning. But to thrust myself into this wasp’s-nest of Steinberg, either by day or by night, or enter it by escalade, is a thing I will not do. Unless,” he continued in a low voice, hesitatingly, “that in your quality of superior in the most illustrious and holy society, I should know how to submit myself to the ‘proofs’ prescribed by our terrible rites.”

Frantz did not appear to notice these last words.

“You are right,” he replied, in a thoughtful manner; “I alone ought to expose myself; besides, the secret I have discovered is not mine—I dare not reveal it to my best friend. I shall act, then, without the help of any one.”

“What say you?” asked Albert, with curiosity.

“Nothing, nothing—I dream wide-awake, my poor Albert; uneasiness makes me childish. I wish nothing for Wilhelmina; I have no longer any means of defending her from the power of her fearful brother. Let us wait for the return of Sigismund; he is engaged for the happiness of all. We should place our confidence in him.”

“Yes, yes, Sigismund is good for giving advice. He is an Ulysses, an eloquent Nestor. I, on the contrary, am a man of action, an impetuous Achilles. When Germany or a friend has need of my arm,

I am always ready, sure and faithful as a tempered sword.

"Well, comrade, I leave you; I am going to profit by the absence of Sigismund to chat with Augusta, the daughter of our host. I do not know how that scamp Muller manages it, but when he is here I cannot say a word to the little Zelter; he abuses the power which his title of initiating into—you know. But now I hear Augusta singing a psalm in the kitchen. We shall see each other shortly."

The frivolous student rushed out of the room. A moment after, the sound of a vigorous slap in the face proved that he was not far from the young hostess, without fearing the eternal *purus esto* of Sigismund Muller.

Frantz fell into deep thought. He drew from his pocket the parchment, the mysterious gift of the hinkende, and going towards the window, he compared the castle and its environs with the plan prepared by Baron Hermann.

After a minute comparison, he left the house, and roamed about amongst the rocks which bordered the Rhine beneath the castle.

After a long absence he returned to the house at sunset, but without doubt his investigation had been crowned with success, for a smile of triumph lighted up his countenance.

When he had reached the first houses in the village, he heard the sound of a flint rebounding behind him from the side of the rock. He stopped short, and returned. A hand waved from one of the loopholes of the tower, as if making a sign for him to wait; at the same instant, the stone whose fall had first drawn his attention to it was at his feet: a paper was attached to it.

Frantz secured and wished of course to read it; but the hand moved about so quickly, that there could be no mistake in supposing that it motioned him to retire, and it disappeared immediately.

Trembling with joy, and fearing that his presence might compromise the person who sent the missive to him, he hastened to gain a retired spot, where he might escape notice from the castle. Then opening the paper, he read these words, written rapidly in pencil by a hand little accustomed to write, no doubt that of Madeleine:—

"Save what is left of the unfortunate family of Steinberg. The baron has lost his reason, and his fits of madness make

me tremble for Wilhelmina, your wife; every minute increases her dangers and ours."

Frantz was struck down at the reading of the note.

"So, then, Albert was right," said he, in despair. "Well, I shall not now wait for the return of Sigismund, as I promised him; he will pardon me for breaking my word under such urgent circumstances. I shall no longer hesitate to go to help Wilhelmina. Yes, I am going to execute my project this very night. My God! protect her a little longer, and I shall save her."

He turned back to have another look at the castle, but he saw no one at the loophole. Frantz wiped away a tear with the back of his hand, and went straight to his room to prepare for his night's work.

But he had just crossed the threshold, when the harsh, authoritative, well-known voice of the Chevalier Ritter resounded in his ear.

"Arrest him there; this time I am pretty certain Count Frederick of Hohenzollern will not escape me. Ah, gentlemen! you have been making a fool of me; but I shall have my revenge."

Before Frantz could make any resistance, four or five men in the dress of the grand ducal police threw themselves before him, rendering escape impossible.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BARON IS MAD.

NIGHT had set in. In a chamber of the tower of Steinberg, Wilhelmina and Madeleine conversed together. The chamber was similar to that occupied by the baron, but was not vaulted. The most remarkable looking part about it was an immense stone chimney-piece; a colossal grate of cast-iron protected the hearth. The furniture of this room was more modern and more comfortable-looking than the other. A mournful silence reigned over the castle.

The two females, seated close to each other near the dull lamp, spoke very low; no one, a few yards from them, could hear their conversation; their voices in this large and ill-lighted apartment awoke echoes which resembled groans.

Wilhelmina was seated in an old-fashioned couch of the time of Louis XV. Her dress still showed the invalid con-

valescent; the sickly paleness of her face, the transparent emaciation of her hands, betrayed her recent sufferings. Notwithstanding the trouble and fretting which weighed upon her, a slight smile played about her mouth, her blue eyes feebly sparkled, whilst she listened to old Madeleine. She, on the contrary, seemed afraid to breathe; the tone of her voice sounded as if in fear, for she frequently interrupted herself when talking, to look round the room.

"So, then, you have seen him this evening?" said Wilhelmina, cheerfully; "you have seen my beloved Frantz. And tell me, does he look entirely recovered from his cruel disease? What was he doing so near the castle? He came to look for me, did he not? Alas! I dare not walk upon the platform. But you have written to him, my good Reutner; you have assured him of my recovery; he knows—"

"He knows what dangers you run here. I have conjured him to come here to our succour. In giving him this advice, I have transgressed the orders of my master; if my lord knew my fault, I should be lost. But I do not regret this my first disobedience; he will take means to save us."

"You were wrong, Madeleine, to address Frantz; he will come here and arouse the anger of Henry—he is so hasty, so rash."

"He is the cause of all our misfortune. Is it not his duty to apply a remedy?"

"Madeleine, I assure you, you exaggerate the dangers of my position. Except this rigorous seclusion, my brother has not subjected me to any bad treatment. Sometimes he is gloomy and silent, at others he speaks to himself with a vehemence which increases his frenzy; but up to this time, his conduct does not prove the existence of those sinister projects of which you have so much fear. My brother is good, Madeleine; and if he was free of that fever which brings on delirium—"

"If he had his own good sense, I would fear neither for you nor for myself, for he has always been an affectionate brother and a kind master. Unfortunately, no more illusion is possible; it is not the fever only which troubles my lord's reason."

"You believe, then—But what has passed to-day, my good Reutner, to have produced this terrible conviction? I imagined I heard on the platform the noise of a gunshot; then, soon after, piercing cries."

Madeleine hesitated to answer.

"I will no longer conceal from you," she replied at last, in a voice so low as scarcely to be heard, "that awful scene. The baron has this day unfortunately given undeniable proofs of his dangerous madness. Until now he hardly remarked that the storks, after so many years' absence, had returned to build in their old spot. This morning, for the first time, he appeared to notice their return, and was a long time examining them. At length he called me to him. He asked me in an absent manner, pointing to the stork which had a sort of necklace:—

"Is not that the same bird which Baron Hermann protected?"

"Yes, my lord," I answered, "that is the hinkende."

"Good; you may go."

"I obeyed. Five minutes after, as I was coming down the staircase to join you, I heard the shot of a gun. Your brother had fired at the hinkende. I trembled in thinking of the new sorrows this sacrilege would bring upon us, when Fritz passed close to me; the baron had sent him to seek the wounded bird. Fritz returned soon after without bringing it with him; the hinkende had disappeared as if by a miracle. Suddenly, fearful cries resounded on the platform; I distinguished the voice of my son, and I ran towards him. May God protect us! My lord, his mouth foaming, his eyes starting out of their sockets, had seized poor Fritz by the arm, and held him hanging beyond the parapet over the abyss below. A second later, what would have been the fate of my son? He would have been smashed upon the rocks of Steinberg."

The poor woman stopped. Her voice failed her at this point.

"In the meantime, Madeleine, Fritz is safe and sound."

"I do not know what I did or said, but my lord looked at me so wildly; then he let Fritz go. Ah, Wilhelmina! had you seen your brother in that dreadful moment, you would have shuddered."

"I do not fear death for myself, Madeleine; but should I die, what would become of Frantz? Neither you nor your son can remain any longer exposed to such dangers as you escaped to-day. Well, advise me, Madeleine, what is to be done?"

"Ah! how do I know? God alone can assist us."

"If we fled from Steinberg? I am strong enough to walk now. Let us place ourselves under the protection of the law."

"Yes; but how to get away from this place? Night and day the baron keeps the keys of the outer gate."

"Could not your son help us?"

"You know but little of Fritz Reutner," said Madeleine, with an air of pride; "he is my pupil; he would rather disobey his Maker than his legitimate master. To-day even, by only using his natural strength, he could have escaped easily from the baron's gripe; but he preferred exposing himself to a frightful death rather than be wanting in the respect due to his lord in defending himself against him. No; expect no assistance from Fritz."

At this point of the conversation the door turned slowly on its rusty hinges. The two females started up with a cry of affright. In the darkness of the staircase, Major Steinberg made his appearance like a ghost.

Without perceiving the terror which he created, he entered with a slow and measured step. In his dress and in his person the same negligence was too apparent. His complexion was livid, and his eyes sparkled like two carbuncles. He was armed in a most ridiculous manner; at his side he wore his sword, whilst stuck into the waistband of his trousers two large horse-pistols obtruded. He carried on his arm the old carbine which he never parted with.

He walked towards Wilhelmina, and kissed her.

"Good evening, sister."

The young girl shivered as if a red-hot iron had touched her forehead.

"Good evening, Henry," she murmured, with an effort; "but why these arms? What have you to fear here?"

"Ah! do you not know?" said he, smiling, and speaking in a low, confidential manner; "if I have to fight a dreadful enemy, I must be well armed; but yield I will not; no, upon my soul, I will not yield."

"Against whom, then, have you to defend yourself?"

"Against the devil."

"The devil?" repeated Madeleine, forgetting that she had been the first to notice the mental derangement of her master.

"Yes! the devil—the demon—the evil spirit," the baron went on, impatiently. "War is declared between us; he will soon see the consequences of attacking a major of a Prussian regiment."

"Henry," said Wilhelmina, weeping,

and taking him by the hand, "I would rather see you enraged against me than hear you speak in this way. Return to yourself; recover your reason, my dear brother, you have no enemy but yourself; the demons who pursue you are only your own evil thoughts."

The major quickly withdrew his hand.

"Poor fool!" said he, angrily, "would you remonstrate with your eldest brother, your tutor, the head of the family? I tell you war is declared. Formerly Satan did not show himself in a visible form. Did he not make me gamble away Steinberg against Ritter, and cause me to lose it? Afterwards, did he not turn my sword against you, the day—that day when you were wounded? It is he still who tempts me every night, and hisses into my ear to strangle you when you are asleep. Now he has renounced all cunning; he has frankly showed himself to me this day; I have seen him—do you hear?—I have seen him with my eyes—he has now appeared to me in the form of a stork."

"They have told me, dear brother," said Wilhelmina, sadly, "that you have killed a poor bird, and that you have not recovered it; but—"

"Yes, they could not find its body. I saw it myself fall wounded to death. Yes, I have seen all that, and yet at this moment the bird is in its nest at the top of the turret, with its female and its young."

"What!" screamed Madeleine, incapable of containing herself, "is the hind-kede now in his nest?"

"He sleeps, I tell you! and if I had any doubts about his infernal origin, I have them no longer. This pretended bird, you see, is a demon. My grandfather Hermann obtained submission from it, but to-day it has revolted against us. If not so, how explain its return after twenty-five years' absence? Then this necklace which it carried has also disappeared. By means of that talisman I could have raised the fortunes of my house, I could have learned where lies the treasure of my ancestors. Well! the bird has returned, but without its collar. After it gained its nest I wished to fire at it again; but just see the influence of the evil spirit—three times I aimed at it, and three times my gun dropped from my hands. This infernal bird stared at me with eyes that froze the blood in my veins."

Wilhelmina only noticed when her

brother spoke his fearful wandering; but the housekeeper, whose mind was filled with those wonderful legends, gave her entire belief to the major's story.

"My God!" said she, mournfully, "can it be true that the benign influence of these storks has turned to enmity. What crimes, then, has this unfortunate race committed to have lost its ancient protectors?"

Wilhelmina looked at Madeleine in amazement. She could not understand why the old woman, with her ordinary common sense, could examine seriously the visions of her brother. The madman, on the contrary, at once caught up the idea of the housekeeper.

"Yes; you are right, good Madeleine; I know how this change comes about. Do you see? The living members of the family have transgressed. The superior spirits, former protectors, have turned against us. There are faults, disgraces unexpiated. But they shall be, and before long."

Wilhelmina clasped her hands with terror.

"Oh, brother!" she cried, "have you not yet pardoned me?"

"She is the cause of all," he exclaimed; "it is she who has driven God from us. Madame Reutner," he added, quickly turning towards her, "have you related to this girl the history of Bertha de Steinberg and Baron Carl de Stoffensels, surnamed the 'handsome equerry'?"

"It is a gloomy story, my lord. I should not have dared—I ought not to relate to Wilhelmina—"

"You old dotard! your head is stuffed with stories of genii, fairies, sorcerers, and yet you do not relate real events, by which she might be benefited. Come, let loose your foolish tongue, and tell my sister the story of Bertha and Carl. Sit down, Wilhelmina, I desire you."

After pacing up and down the room two or three times, he made them take their places, and he sat down beside them, with his carbine laid across his knees. As Madeleine kept silent, he roared out—

"Will you speak?"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LEGEND OF BERTHA.

"MAY God pardon me for invoking such recollections," said Madeleine; "but my

lord wishes it, and I shall not disobey him. Bertha de Steinberg was the only daughter of the noble Baron Emmanuel, who had a blind affection for her. He married late, and she was dearer to him as the child of his old age. He had no secrets from her, and her every wish was gratified as soon as it was formed. In truth, Bertha showed herself well worthy of this affection; she was modest, well educated, and so beautiful, that you could not look at her without loving her."

"Like you, my sister."

"At that time there was at the castle of Stoffensels, on the other side of the Rhine, a knight renowned in all the tourneys by his bearing, brave in combat, accomplished in tongue, whom they called the 'handsome equerry.' He saw Bertha and loved her; she loved him equally, and they soon found means to make known their mutual feelings; but such was the state of rivalry existing between the Steinbergs and Stoffensels, that the young people could never be united. They were not ignorant of this. In the meantime the knight found means of introducing himself every night into the castle, without doubt by gaining over some of the guards of the barony—"

"Is this the way you relate the history of my race?" rudely interrupted the baron. "This young spark gained over no one. Under our feet there is now a subterranean passage, which leads to the country; this passage served in time of siege for messengers to go out during the night, after having their eyes bandaged; for the lords of Steinberg reserved to themselves alone the knowledge of the *Flucht-weg*. The tradition also states, that in a redoubt of this cave my ancestors have hidden their wealth; perhaps there is still to be found there gold enough to raise up my fortunes. But no one knows where to find this cavern, which the unworthy Bertha revealed to the wretch Stoffensels. Hermann was the last who knew of it; but besieged in 1795, he was taken prisoner and brought to France, where he died. Hermann was unable to transmit, either to my father or my uncle, any information on this subject. They received, however, from him a verbal message, by which he recommended them 'to take care of the storks at Steinberg.' For a long time my father tried to find out the meaning of this advice, which he in turn transmitted to me, and it is for that— But patience, patience!"

He pointed with his finger to an in-

visible enemy, and grinding his teeth, called upon Madeleine to continue.

"I dared not speak of the *Flucht-weg* in your presence," replied the old woman, timidly. "I know how jealous the old barons were of the secret. Some one told the Baron Emmanuel of the intrigue of his daughter. Bertha was very culpable; she had told the eternal enemies of her family a fact which would compromise the safety of the castle and its inhabitants. Nevertheless, as the baron adored his child, he went to her and asked her if she loved this Stoffensels. Perhaps, in his paternal heart, he nourished the thought of forgiving her, if she retrieved her fault by a sincere confession; but Bertha knew the insurmountable obstacles which opposed themselves to her union with her lover. She had the mournful courage to conceal the truth. Her father pressed her in every way, in vain; she swore that the equerry was as odious to her as any other of his race. The baron said nothing then, but made his arrangements so well, that the following night he surprised Stoffensels in the chamber of his imprudent daughter."

"And how did he avenge himself?" asked Wilhelmina, affected in spite of herself with the tale.

"I shall tell you, sister," replied the major. "Our grandfather called to him a faithful servant of the barony, a man devoted and discreet even to his death, as we should call Fritz Reutner; they dragged Bertha and her lover into the cavern, of which they had made such a culpable use, and shut them in. The two died of hunger."

Wilhelmina screamed and covered her face, whilst Madeleine herself seemed seized with horror.

"Was Baron Emmanuel, then, so cruel?"

Henry appeared not to have heard her; he rose and walked up and down the room.

"Yes," said he, as if to himself, "that is the way they avenged themselves formerly; this is the way that I should avenge myself. God has punished me in abandoning me to the demon. The family of Steinberg is fallen into disgrace—everywhere ruin, dishonour, shame! Satan," he added, turning to the half-opened door, "give such a revenge as that of Emmanuel's, and you shall have my soul."

He stopped as if waiting for a reply;

then a sardonic smile touched his lips.

"Satan does not care for that stake, for he will have it for nothing; but," he continued, addressing the two females, frozen with fright, "the night advances. Separate. Madame Reutner, leave to this young girl the time to meditate upon the misfortunes she has caused. You, return to your chamber and pray, if you can."

"My lord, I relied upon passing this night near Wilhelmina."

"Go, I tell you!"

The old woman did not resist, much less when she saw the baron himself prepare to retire. She leaned forward towards Wilhelmina, and whispered—

"Don't be uneasy. I shall tell Fritz to watch over him until he goes to bed. Adieu, we must not disobey, for fear of irritating him."

The baron stood erect before Wilhelmina, looking at her with sparkling eyes. Suddenly he laid hold of his carbine, as if he meant to use it against the unfortunate girl. She was on the point of screaming out, but Henry laid down his weapon, and impressed on her face a kiss, saying, in a sweet, affectionate voice—

"Good night, my little sister."

He fled before Wilhelmina had time to return his fraternal farewell.

She was now alone, listening to the heavy footsteps of the baron as he mounted the winding staircase of the turret, and the lighter step of Madeleine, who had already regained her chamber in another part of the castle; she fell upon her bed completely exhausted.

Already enfeebled by her physical suffering, she succumbed under the weight of so many trials. Over-excited by events—whether real or miraculous, they so mixed themselves together, that reason could scarcely recognise the limit of the one from the other—her over-worked brain conjured up strange visions.

Everything which surrounded her increased this nervous disposition. Silence the most deadly reigned over the castle; the lamp threw a pale, feeble light around her; the old furniture cracked or groaned without any apparent cause; the ragged tapestry trembled at the least air. The threatening words of her brother, the mournful legends she had just listened to, peopled the solitude with frightful phantoms. She tried to drive them away, and they incessantly came back again.

She hardly dared to wipe away the drops of perspiration with which her face was covered; she started at the motion of her shadow on the wall.

At last, however, she went on her knees to offer up her evening prayer.

The same quietness always prevailed at Steinberg; but now she imagined that she could distinguish the voice of the baron invoking the spirit of darkness. She began her usual prayer, but vainly did she try to raise her thoughts to God—they were chained to earth by terror.

She got up from her knees suddenly, and listened. A heavy sound, irregular, but continued and distinct, was heard close to her. They had spoken of a subterranean work, or tumbling down in the thickness of the wall. This noise, no doubt, came from one part of the chamber only; but in this room, full of echoes, it appeared to come from all parts at once.

"Oh, my God!" said she, aloud, in raising her hands towards heaven; "have you then permitted the spirit of evil to torment poor human beings?"

However, the noise became every minute louder and nearer; at last it seemed to concentrate at the side of the massive chimney; they had said it was crumbling. Wilhelmina, wild with horror, her hair dishevelled, her arms outstretched, awaited in mortal anguish what was about to happen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RECOGNITION.

WE must now return to the village tavern, where we left Frantz in the hands of Ritter and the police.

His resistance was short, for he found that it was useless; he allowed himself to be taken to the common room, where he found Albert, like himself, a prisoner.

Albert, seated between two men appointed to watch him, smoked his pipe philosophically, and did not seem to care a straw about his position.

His arrest was so sudden—it took place when his liberty was so necessary—that Frantz was on the point of abandoning himself to despair.

The deference which the Chevalier Ritter and his people exhibited towards him, when he no longer resisted, left him in no doubt; he was recognised; they would bring him before his angry father; replace him under the authority of his proud and

jealous brother. However, the sight of Albert being also a prisoner gave him an idea that some mistake had been committed, and that it was possible to take advantage of it.

"What is the meaning of this, gentlemen?" he asked, with dignity. "Why do you arrest me? Of what am I accused?"

"If we mistake not," said the Chevalier Ritter, with a politeness slightly jocose, and unfolding a large placard which he held in his hand, "we shall soon know; but this time I shall not allow myself to be duped either by you or Sigismund Muller. If he were here, I would arrest him just the same, until I know which of you three is the Count Frederick of Hohenzollern."

A secret hope flashed across the mind of Frantz. Ritter appeared to be not so well instructed as he had at first imagined. The imminence of his danger restored his presence of mind.

"And then, if even one of us should turn out to be the person of whom you speak, by what right—"

"My right is clear, sir," replied the chamberlain: "it is written entirely by the hand of the grand duke, authorizing me to arrest Count Frederick, his son."

"Well, chevalier, how do you make it out that my friend or I—"

"I am most anxious to explain," replied the chamberlain, "and the real Count Frederick will acknowledge my condescension. I awaited at Baden the result of the promises of your friend Sigismund, when I received a letter from an old servant of the family, actually established at Heidelberg. He stated that he had positively recognised, some months since, the young Count Frederick amongst the students of the university of that city. He had followed him, had seen him enter a house, the address of which he gave me. The letter was of a sufficiently old date, for it had travelled to the Residence before it reached me. Again I began to distrust M. Sigismund a little. I then decided to go at once to Heidelberg, and to the house itself. Three students occupied the same lodgings, and all three were then absent. I asked their names, and they gave me your own and that of your friends. One of you three is Count Frederick, but which of you I am as yet ignorant."

"I think, sir," said Frantz, with assumed calmness, "since you have come from Heidelberg, it was easy enough for

you to get some information about my family; it is obscure, but——”

“So obscure,” replied Ritter, smiling disdainfully, “that I decided not to trouble myself about it. I have played a safer game; knowing that I should inevitably meet you all here, I started for Manheim and obtained the assistance of the police, and here we are. In the meantime, thanks to the description—for I am told it is exact—I shall have no difficulty in recognising the son of my august master, in spite of all his efforts to hide himself.”

He then began to read minutely the paper with which he had fortified himself, stopping from time to time to compare the features of the young man with the indications on his placard. Frantz appeared beyond hope.

Albert, who up to this moment, strange to say, had maintained a silence stoical and superb, stretched forth his hand to Frantz under the shoulder of one of his guardians.

“Courage, comrade,” said he, raising his eyes to heaven with the air of a martyr. “Let us not be cast down by adversity. The trick which this cowardly emissary of tyranny has employed to secure our persons proves how much we are feared; let us show ourselves worthy patriots. I admit that for a long time I have darkened the vision of the enemies of our old Germanic liberties. The watchmen of Heidelberg have more than once manifested towards me a bad spirit, when I returned from a tavern at night. They knew that I was always ready to draw my sword for the imprescriptible rights of Germany; they knew me as a friend of the people—a despiser of despotism. That which now has come to pass, I have foreseen; I resign myself to it. They may cause my blood to flow, but every drop will bring another defender of Germany. Yes, vile slaves!” he continued, by a magnificent oratorical flourish, addressing himself to Ritter and his myrmidons; “you may throw me into a dark dungeon, but my voice, piercing through the vault, will awake, by a cry of liberty, the slumbering people. Ay! to my latest breath I will revere the glory of my country.”

When he had finished this tirade he reseated himself, and putting his pipe in his mouth, he relapsed into a disdainful silence.

“Come, sir,” said Frantz to the chamberlain, who continued his investigations, “I shall no longer prolong your embar-

rassment. It is useless to torment strangers, and when it must be——”

“Patience, M. Frantz,” interrupted Ritter, with a smile of satisfaction on his face; “my doubts will not be long. I think I have discovered the real son of his highness: notwithstanding his *love for the people*, his character, impetuous and proud, has betrayed his origin. *Blue eyes*,” he continued, examining in turn his instructions and Albert’s face; “are his eyes blue? I should have thought grey; but I understand; respect for the son of his highness would not permit a simple clerk—Hum! flatterer. *Light beard*.—It looks slightly red; but age and care might change its colour.”

Frantz, impelled by the desire to fly to the rescue of Wilhelmina, spoke to the student in a respectful and melancholy tone.

“My noble friend, it is useless to dissimulate any longer; you know well how to assume the tone and the manners of comrades, but it is quite impossible to deceive the Chevalier Ritter.”

Albert Schwartz swallowed the smoke of his pipe, and was nearly choked.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOCK PRINCE.

“It is useless to deny yourself any longer, count,” exclaimed Ritter, chuckling. “Although this description does not correspond exactly with your person, the nobleness of your gestures, the elevation of your ideas, have caused you to be recognised as a noble offshoot of Hohenzollern. Besides, you have well acted the character of a coarse, drunken, and brawling student; but you have exaggerated it a little, and that is why you betrayed yourself. Success has at last crowned my efforts. I have found again the son of my noble master. Excuse the painful duty which I must fulfil towards you.”

“Come, finish this business,” exclaimed Albert, impatiently. “If you do not arrest me on account of my patriotism, in which I glory, who then do you take me for?”

“For what you are in reality, count,” Frantz replied, quickly; “for the second son of the reigning prince of Hohenzollern. Hereafter deception is useless.”

Albert turned towards his companion; Frantz was grave, serious; his manner and his countenance exhibited no mockery.

“Ah, then, you will drive me mad!” exclaimed the unhappy student. “Am I

no longer Albert Schwartz, the comrade of—”

“ You are the Count Frederick of Hohenzollern,” replied Frantz, always with the same calmness; “ and the proof is, that you watch without ceasing, for no one knows when the day, the hour will come.”

These mysterious words, which Albert alone understood, calmed him instantly.

“ A proof! again a proof!” he murmured: “ this one is as inconceivable as the others. Ah! when shall it be my turn to be initiated?”

Frantz watched him anxiously.

“ Well,” said Schwartz, after a pause, and turning to Ritter, “ suppose I am the person you speak of, what do you wish me to do?”

“ You avow it, then?” cried the chamberlain.

“ I ask you,” replied Schwartz, rather uneasy, “ what would you do if I were Count Frederick?”

“ My conduct will depend upon your inclination. If you agree to the wishes of my august master and his eldest son, your brother, I have orders to convey you to Munster with all the honours due to your rank. If you do not, then I am to bring you to the Residence, where, I am sorry to inform you, you will be imprisoned and strongly guarded.”

“ Oh, hang the Residence!” exclaimed the student, with a grimace. “ But what shall I have to do at Munster?”

“ You will enter a religious house in that city; and you will be canon, according to the vow of your parents and the traditions of your family.”

“ Canon!” the student murmured, thoughtfully; “ diable! that's not so bad. Well, then, M. Ritter, I go for the canonry,” adding, in a loud voice, “ I resume my title and my rank.”

Frantz never dreamed of a success so complete; he secretly pressed the hand of his comrade. The chamberlain could not conceal his joy.

“ Thus then I have entirely succeeded,” said he; “ what prosperity is in store for me! How I shall be received at the Residence of Hohenzollern! What joy for your noble father! I will confess it, I feared that during your long absence you might have committed yourself somehow. Your excellency will excuse my stupidity,” he continued, looking ironically at Frantz, “ but knowing that one of the three young gentlemen whom I saw here was Count Frederick, I had then a ridiculous idea. A certain resemblance to his highness

struck me the first time I saw M. Frantz Stopfel, and I thought—ha! ha! ha!—I entreat you to excuse this unseasonable mirth, but really I must laugh at my own blunder. To confound the son of an artisan with a scion of a princely family!”

“ Not a word against the son of an artisan,” replied Albert, gravely. “ I love the people, Ritter; besides, Frantz has been my comrade; he may be always assured of my protection.”

These words were pronounced with his natural impudence; the student evidently was serious about his new title.

“ Now then, my dear chamberlain, of course we cannot leave this place immediately.”

“ If it please your excellency, we shall not set off before to-morrow morning. You are aware that I have some business to arrange with Major Steinberg. His sister is, I am told, cured of her wound; it is time to reclaim *my* castle. The taking possession will not be long; in the meantime, to render it more celebrated, I intend to bring with me a magistrate of the country. These arrangements will detain me an hour or two to-morrow morning; but we can easily overtake the lost time. Whether we travel by land or water, your excellency's own pleasure must decide.”

“ We shall certainly travel post-chaise like great lords—as I am,” answered Schwartz; “ and I shall go joyfully to receive the investiture of my canonry. Yes; decidedly, Master Ritter, this change is preferable to my former position of a poor wretch of a student. But give your orders for supper; you will charge yourself with all expenses, I imagine?”

“ Your excellency may command me; the prince your father would reproach me for not complying with all your wishes.”

“ Let them, then, at once prepare a splendid supper. I like the Rhine wine for dinner and Johannisberg for dessert. I desire also, Master Ritter, that the brave fellows who accompanied you shall eat and drink well. They shall celebrate, glass in hand, my happy reconciliation with my father. For my part, I am utterly sick of the beer and smoked beef of those university taverns. I wish royal splendour by the liberty of— I mean the armorial bearings of my illustrious house.”

Whilst Albert went on in this way, Frantz remained silent and thoughtful. The swaggering of his comrade did not cause him a smile. He went up to

Ritter and said to him, with a little irony—

"I am now free, I think, and can go where I like?"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Frantz," replied the chamberlain, disdainfully. "Let this gentleman pass," he added, addressing himself to the police; "there is nothing in the order of the Grand Duke that concerns him."

Frantz bowed and was about to leave, but Albert detained him familiarly.

"You shall sup with me, Frantz; I do not so quickly disown my companions in misery."

The darkness which already began to be perceived, prevented the features of the real count from being seen; however, he replied politely, that the debility resulting from his late illness obliged him to retire, and begged his excellency to excuse him.

At this moment Albert asked him, in a whisper—

"How do I acquit myself in my new character of prince?"

"Admirably; but *purus esto*."

"I understand. The proof would not be difficult, provided nothing more inconvenient occurred."

"Fear nothing; the real Count of Hohenzollern will not come to challenge his title and name."

He went away quickly. Albert, reassured, raised his voice again; soon after, the whole house was in a turmoil, obeying his extravagant orders.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FLUCHT-WEG.

FRANTZ took advantage of the moment to reach his chamber. Prudence ordered him to leave the tavern at once; his trick must be discovered; the follies of Schwartz would awake Ritter's suspicions; it was wonderful how he allowed himself to be caught in this stupid trap.

Darkness was not yet sufficiently profound to enable Frantz to execute his project of entering Steinberg. Besides, he had given his word to Sigismund to undertake nothing until he returned. Notwithstanding the gravity of the circumstances, he asked himself if he ought not to wait for a friend so prudent, so devoted to him. The recollection of the fearful news which he received that even-

ing from Madeleine renewed his anxiety. Wilhelmina was in danger; every other consideration fled before that one.

After some moments of reflection, he lighted his lamp and wrote to Sigismund. The letter was finished, and he thought of how it was to be secretly handed to Sigismund when he arrived the following day. Chance came to his assistance.

The noise of a rather animated discussion in the next room was heard; immediately after, Augusta rushed into Frantz's chamber, her cheeks crimson, her toilet crumpled. She appeared surprised at seeing him there, and was about to go back.

"What is the matter, pretty Augusta?"

"Nothing, nothing, sir," said the young German, with an awkward bow; "your friend Albert followed me to kiss me. Since Mr. Sigismund's departure, he has persecuted me without ceasing; this evening especially has he tormented me. He pretends that he is a prince, and that a prince has a right to do just as he likes."

"It is a right that other men would envy him too much," said Frantz, with a melancholy smile.

"Well, prince or no prince, I do not like him," replied Augusta, with a pouting air; "I like Mr. Sigismund much better. There is an honest, polite, well-educated student. He has always something pleasant to say. Absolutely like yourself, Mr. Frantz; and without—"

Frantz was struck with an idea; he interrupted the young girl in the midst of her confidence.

"Now, Augusta, would you render a great service to Sigismund and myself?"

"With all my heart."

"Take this letter and give it to Muller the instant he returns from Manheim, this evening or to-morrow morning; especially let no one else see it."

"Your wishes shall be faithfully carried out," said Augusta, hiding the note in her bosom. "But are you going to leave us, then?"

"I have not done yet, my good girl; I have something else to ask of you."

"You may command me; only make haste, my father may call me. The whole house is in an uproar: preparing supper for this *soi-disant* prince and the new master of Steinberg."

"I want the key of the chain that sets your father's boat free."

He then detailed other necessary things for the execution of his plan. The

girl listened to him with anxious astonishment.

"I can procure you all you have asked for," she replied; "but tell me, I pray you, for what use—"

"Do not interrogate me; a short time hence you will know, perhaps, the great boon you have conferred upon me."

Augusta went away without speaking; she soon returned with what he wanted. These were, amongst other things, a lantern, a steel to strike a light with, and a heavy pickaxe, which in case of need might be made a formidable weapon. Frantz took charge of all these things, thanked her briefly, and was about to leave.

"Good God! where are you going?"

"Adieu, Augusta; remember my letter. Give it secretly to Sigismund, and especially to no one else, or great misfortune may fall upon us."

"Mr. Frantz, once more, where do you go so late, ill as you are?"

"Pray for me, dear Augusta—for me and for another, worthy of your affection and your pity. Her fate and mine will be decided this night."

The young hostess, with tears in her eyes, tried to detain him; but Frantz, with an affectionate gesture of adieu, left the room. The police being exclusively occupied with Albert, it was easy for him to go out without being seen.

The night was clear and calm. A light breeze blew at intervals. The moon had risen on the other side of the Rhine, furrowing with silver the dark waters of this majestic river. The most profound silence reigned along both banks.

Frantz turned his eyes towards the castle, which rose up on his left like a monstrous hump of the earth. At this hour of the night, both rock and castle were hidden by a grey fog. No light shone beyond this leaden sheet of mist. Nothing human or living showed that the old tower of Steinberg was not already abandoned to the spectres with which local legends peopled it.

The young man walked along the bank of the river; he soon reached the base of the rock of Steinberg, at the place where the river washed it. There Frantz reconnoitred in the midst of darkness; but his hesitation did not last long. The observations he had made during the day turned out to be correct; he directed his steps to a large sloping rock. Under this rock was a species of dark hiding-place.

The student stopped; and, his feet in the water, his ear on the watch, he looked about him on all sides to satisfy himself that he was not followed.

Reassured by the silence, he lighted his lantern; a red reflection, which the boatmen of the Rhine might take for a will-o'-the-wisp, lengthened itself on the waters. By this uncertain light he examined carefully the place where he now stood.

This cavity, with its abrupt sides, presented no trace of the work of man; the Rhine, in its overflows, appeared to have undermined the rock in gnawing it away here and there in a fantastic manner. Some large stones, accumulated towards the bottom, were covered with the slime the receding waters left behind. Aquatic plants grew about; river shells strewed the ground. Nothing could be noticed in this place except an ordinary freak of nature.

But the young man was not deceived; he placed his lantern near him, and arming himself with the pickaxe, he attacked the stones heaped together at the bottom of this grotto.

These stones appeared to form one rock; however, having no adherence between them, they rolled down at the first shock, crushing beneath them the insect population peculiar to wet places.

Frantz redoubled his efforts; at last his pickaxe, striking against a plank, returned a hollow, deep, mournful sound, which seemed to come from the bowels of the earth; it might have been taken for a groan of one of those ill-doing gnomes with which German superstitions people mines and caverns.

Frantz could hardly restrain a cry of joy; his hand trembled, his heart beat with violence. He had then found this mysterious passage which the ancient lords of Steinberg alone knew, whose existence they had taken such pains to conceal from other men; this Fluchtweg, this escape-way, which played so important a character in the history of the barony.

The cavern, whose secret had just been revealed to him in so miraculous a manner by a stork, would perhaps conduct him near Wilhelmina.

At this thought he redoubled his efforts; the stones falling one by one under his tools, enabled him to see more and more distinctly a low arched gate.

In the meantime, the farther he advanced in his work the more Frantz felt

his fears arise. This gate would resist his attacks, and in trying to break it, he ran the risk of being heard in the village, which was only two or three hundred steps from where he then stood.

Happily, these anxieties did not long continue. After having cleared away the bottom of the cavern, he introduced his iron pick between the rock and the gate, then he gave it a sudden pull. The hinges and iron-work, worn away by the moisture of many centuries, yielded noisily, and the gate fell.

A blast of air, mephitic and mortal, issued from the mouth of the cavern; Frantz was thrown down almost suffocated on the stones he had such difficulty in displacing. The pure and fresh air coming from the river soon restored his senses.

He raised himself up and tried to drag himself towards the entrance of the *Flucht-weg*, but his limbs refused to aid him. The light of his lantern, besides, became pale and threatened to go out altogether, a sure sign that the deleterious gases accumulated at the bottom of the cavern had not yet been exhaled. To take a step into it before the air had been renewed, would have been certain death; and the young man knew it. He was forced, then, to wait if he wished to complete the enterprise he had so manfully undertaken.

He sat down at the entrance of the grotto, but his impatience was overwhelming; every minute lost put back the instant of seeing Wilhelmina. No longer master of himself, he rose, took his lantern, and making a sign of the cross, entered boldly into the cave.

This new attempt might have been fatal to him. He felt oppressed, panting, almost suffocated; nevertheless, he did not draw back. Besides, as chance might conduct some one passing to discover the entrance, he tried to replace the remains of the worm-eaten gate.

This precaution taken, he worked away in the passage, which sloped up like a subterranean pathway of the rock.

Whether the mephitic gases, naturally heavy, had accumulated in the lower part of the crypt, or whether from some air in the upper part coming through some unknown vent, Frantz, in advancing, felt his difficulty of breathing diminish; his respiration became more regular; he

soon was collected enough to make his observations.

The passage was narrow and not high, cut entirely in the rock; it formed a vast spiral, the base of the castle being its culminating point. In some places, the water dropping from the stone formed at the top little stalactites, whose bright crystals sparkled in the light of the lantern.

A fearful calm reigned in these gloomy galleries; the sound only of Frantz's steps awoke a feeble echo, as if the student had been followed at a distance by some invisible being.

When he stopped, this ominous noise ceased all at once; then a drop of water, detaching itself from the vault, fell upon the rock, producing a note, sweet, musical, and full of melancholy. *

At last he thought he had arrived at the end of his subterranean walk; he had made many circuits, and it seemed impossible that he had not reached the foundation of the tower. He entered suddenly into a sort of vast spacious cave, whose length the lantern failed to illuminate.

To his left, a door was contrived in the side of the rock; this door, strengthened with girders of iron and still provided with bolts, thanks to the dryness of this part of the crypt, seemed to have resisted the attacks of time.

Frantz stopped, and drawing from his pocket the parchment of the hinkende, he carefully examined to ascertain his present position; but this side of the plan was nearly illegible, and presented only confused tracings. He judged that he was wrong and that he must still go on.

Nevertheless, before pursuing his route, and before entering the passage which he saw led to the other extremity of the cavern, he had the curiosity to open this door so carefully closed.

He tried then to drive back from their grooves the still solid bolts, and with difficulty he succeeded.

A large padlock of fantastic form, eaten away and rusty, presented less difficulty, for at the first attempt it crumbled away.

Frantz, using all his strength, pushed open the door; it rolled back on its hinges, and its ominous grinding noise was echoed through the depths of the *Flucht-weg*.

(To be continued.)

BEAUTY—WHAT IS IT?

SOME philosophers assert that such a quality as beauty has no existence. If this affirmation is viewed abstractly, we might be more disposed to credit the declaration. That beauty has an absolute existence, we can neither affirm nor deny with any more certainty than we affirm or deny that judgment is a function of the mind; for who can declare that if what is called ugly never impressed the mind in the manner in which it does, their organs of perception would revolt at beholding this phase of matter?

Beauty has a relative existence, and excites admiration in proportion to its adaptation to the parts with which it is connected. Our perceptions of the beautiful are modified to a great extent by habit, and by those associations which afford pleasing recollections. But suppose there was an entirely different plan in nature, and that what we now conceive to be beautiful had no being, but that its negative side was so arranged as to produce pleasure, how could we account for such a wonderful revolution in opinion? But some might attempt to obviate this difficulty by declaring that there would be a corresponding revolution in sentiment. However, no proposition can be advanced which is hypothetical, that will not admit of a negative and positive argument. Yet how are we to reconcile the difference in the perceptions of beauty as it does exist? What some admire others consider ugly. Hence, as to what principle produces beauty there can be no definite standard, or no universal theory. But others might argue in the affirmative, and state that nature has placed a certain principle in the mind which enables us to receive pleasure from the contemplation of the beautiful. Now it is evident that the corporeal senses are the media through which the qualities of external objects are conveyed to the mind. Many philosophers have exercised all their energies of intellect in trying to discover what particular quality or combination of qualities possessed by a certain class of objects produce sensation of beauty.

Many theories have been advanced on the subject, but debate proves the fallacy of all. Utility is the principal hypothesis which has been adopted. But it is evident that this assertion is false, because many articles in common use have no beauty. For example, the culinary appa-

ratus are essential to every individual; but who would think that this fact presupposes the existence of beauty in a coffee-pot or gridiron? On the contrary, the corolla of the tulip, and of flowers in general, are very beautiful, and awaken the liveliest perceptions of pleasure; but botanists affirm that this varied array of charming colours is of no use to the generation, growth, or fructification of the plant, and that if the corolla was deprived of all its magnificence the vegetable kingdom would flourish in the same luxuriance.

Another theory, equally absurd, maintains that a variety of features so arranged as to convey the idea of unity and symmetrical proportions, may constitute beauty; but it is evident we can perceive beauty in objects in which no variety exists, and where geometry has never exercised its functions to produce a symmetrical outline. For example, the sunny skies of Italy have been admired by all nations, and ages, and poets, exclusively for the clear, deep azure which magically paints the ethereal concave.

Again, other things present such a variety as to preclude the ideal of beauty; hence there is no universal standard or source of beauty. But certain classes of objects possess peculiar attributes which concur in conveying an idea of beauty, such as colour, design, delicacy, smoothness, motion, and their associated properties. Colour is one of the principal elements of beauty. The only reason we can assign for this is, that the structure of the lenses and the arrangement of the humours of the eye is such, that it receives more pleasure from a certain combination of colours than from others; but there is a decided difference in the appreciation of colours in the refined and in the uncultivated taste. The former delights in a harmonious arrangement of delicate hues, but the latter in a collection of dazzling tints so arranged as to fatigue the eye and disgust the mind. For example, I have seen some gipsies with bright red dresses trimmed with yellow flounces and green ribbon. But the association of certain colours with historical incidents, natural scenes of personal recollections, often arouse perceptions of beauty; and so enhance the admiration produced by them in their abstract nature, that all other colours degenerate in our estimation.

simply because they are not associated. Hence the red, white, and blue arouses the most eloquent perceptions of delight, and the most lofty and patriotic emotions, because the American flag is a combination of these hues ; not only because it is the American flag does it receive such bursts of applause from the Western Continent, and the universal respect and honour of the nations of the Eastern Hemisphere, but because it moves over a land whose march sublime of improvement has exceeded in the last half century that of any other nation of the globe. As the majestic folds of this glorious banner respond to the finger of a zephyr while it glides through the stars in the azure fields, unfurling to the breeze this emblem of celestial beauty, the rocks, mountains, yea, all nature sends back the echo thundering on us, that long as the blue concave with its magnificent array of brilliant worlds waves over the world, so long shall its representative wave over the Western Continent, from the British boundary on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south. Let vile, degenerate politicians try to deprive our glorious ensign of a star to form for themselves a coronet ; but they will be as unsuccessful in their attempts as if they were endeavouring to snatch a star from the ethereal concave.

Green is a colour which harmonizes with the anatomy of the eye, and from its association with many charming scenes in nature, impresses our mind with beauty.

As regards the figure of objects necessary to produce admiration, symmetrical proportion, although not the only quality necessary to beauty, is essential to its perfection. As a general rule, certain geometrical figures present a beautiful appearance, such as squares, triangles, polygons, circles, and, above all, the curve line, which all nations agree to be the line of beauty. The sublime architecture of Grecian artists, the sculptuary of Angelo, and the paintings of Raphael, all owe their unparalleled attractions, to a great extent, to this principle. Hogarth is of opinion that beauty of figure consists in a succession of curve-lines, such as we see in most shells : a lady's ringlet also possesses this principle.

Smoothness is essential to beauty. The deep blue ocean, when in a quiescent state the silvery rays of Luna slumber on its surface, and majestically gild the watery expanse like an unbroken sea of crystal, until the stars of heaven reflected from the liquid depths, the scene then partakes

of the beautiful. But when the waves rise in mountains and descend in valleys, when noble navies ride in all the magnificence of power on the undulating surface, thus exhibiting the harmony of political war and that of the elements, while the golden darts of Phœbus, like spirits wreathed in light dancing on the watery surface, beauty no longer presides, but sublimity is now enshrined.

Ascending motion also produces beauty. Steam possesses this property in an eminent degree, and demonstrates Hogarth's theory. The ascending curves, like mighty columns, excite admiration ; and the most delicate perceptions of beauty are aroused when we behold these graceful aerial monuments ever rise and then magically melt in the ambient atmosphere. This succession of spiral columns, rising and disappearing, forms some of the most beautiful features in the pictures of poets and painters. The gilding of a silvery stream partakes of the beautiful, but the motion of lightning conveys ideas of sublimity. Delicacy is essential to beauty. The Greeks illustrated this principle to an unparalleled degree in their poetry, sculptuary, painting, and architecture. Design can be plainly perceived in all objects which produce beauty. The parts are so arranged as to be subservient to some useful purpose. Hence the human eye is the most delicate and beautiful piece of mechanism in nature. The lenses are so arranged, and the humours constructed, as to admit more light at one time than at another by the expansion and contraction of the iris, and the reflecting and refracting power of the different lenses in conveying an image to the retina, unequivocally declare the superlative beauty of this work of design ; hence proportion and the adaptation of the component parts of the whole is considered by some as the chief element of beauty. This principle is equally applicable to the composer. In a literary production, all ornament must be rejected that is foreign to the subject ; a symmetrical proportion must be established between the sentences, so that all ideas and figures must sustain certain definite relations to the literary structure ; and the most brilliant ornaments degenerate into blemishes, if they do not concur to strengthen the main edifice, and are not so introduced as to harmonize with the remainder of the structure of literature. In some of the creations of nature and art we see a combination of the attributes of beauty in a certain class of objects, such

as a collection of shells, a bouquet of flowers, and some specimens of the fine arts. But there is a loftier description of beauty than any which has yet been mentioned—moral beauty. It is not such a difficult task to ascertain the origin of this kind of beauty as it is to discover what fundamental quality produces external attractions: in comparing the former to the latter, physical beauty sinks into nonentity. Gracefulness, though not an element necessary to beauty in all its departments, is, nevertheless, essential to certain species; hence the charms of the *Venus de Medici* is attributable to the graceful arrangement of the different parts. The beauty of the mind is analogous to moral beauty, it being very seldom that the one exists independent of the other. This kind of beauty is very complicated; nevertheless, it can be resolved into one fundamental principle—that a fast intellect is not allied to a fast tongue.

We will now consider the charms possessed by the mirror of the soul. The human countenance is very complex in its design—the symmetrical proportions of the different organs, and their conformity to the face, with the complexion also approaching various degrees to the standard of beauty; but the expression of the countenance, as delineating mental attributes, is the greatest point to be considered. It is this which throws a mystic charm over the face, and enhances the attractions of the most beautiful features. The soul sustains a very ultimate relation to the face, but it is very difficult to understand or discover the precise nature of this relation. The physiognomist, Campanella, declared he could read the thoughts of any man's mind simply by studying the expression of the face, the countenance being to him a correct manuscript of the intents and purposes of the heart. The ear can detect beauty in sound as well as the eye beholds this quality in objects. A sweet and melodious combination of sounds generally occurs in music. The tones of the organ are solemn and sublime, but the harp, the piano, the lute, and other musical instruments, produce sweet tones and beautiful airs. As beauty in objects is enhanced by certain associations, so is it true of sound. The cry of the stork is insupportable to some people; but as this bird is an object of superstition to the Hollander, he regards the cry as possessing a peculiar charm and beauty. Those

sounds of the human voice which are deep, and gradually increase in strength and volume, like diverging rays of light, are regarded as most beautiful. When we speak of beauty in writing, we limit the application to the ideas and the manner in which they are expressed. Among the ancients, Virgil and Cicero are distinguished for the beauty of their periods and their style. Among the moderns, Lamartine, Addison, and Irving.

It is obvious that our perceptions of the beautiful are modified and often established by taste. Nothing is more capricious than this power of intellect. Not only every nation has its standard, but different ages of the same nation and different individuals of the same age present wonderful varieties of taste; but a fundamental principle necessarily pervades all nations and ages, which enables the cultivated taste to perceive true beauty wherever it exists. If this were not so, Homer's *Iliad* would not descend through successive generations in the flowery car of universal applause, every critic, ancient and modern, acknowledging that it is a masterpiece of sublimity.

Scarcely another word in the language admits of as wide a range of application as beauty. All that pleases the ear or the eye is judged by this scale. Scenes in nature, the productions of art, airs in music, various literary productions, theorems in geometry, questions in algebra, principles in philosophy, and scientific data, are all susceptible of impressing the mind with ideas of beauty.

As we have said before, taste is the only tribunal which is capable of judging of the beauty possessed by these things, and nothing is more fluctuating. All individuals possess certain mental attributes to a greater or less extent, modified by education or ignorance, which enable them to derive pleasure from the viewing of particular objects. Hence the taste of some might cause them to derive more pleasure from reading *Mother Goose's Melodies* than the loftiest strains of the epic muse. Others might perceive more interest in perusing the popular novels that flood the literary world, which are a disgrace to the march of mind in the nineteenth century. Vitiated taste is equally common in the vocal department. Some might perceive beauty in the affected screams which often accompany instrumental music, while they would totally disregard the sweet, mellow cadence; while others would discover more beauty

in a coarse painting which fatigues the eye and disgusts the intellect by an unharmonious arrangement of brilliant colours, than in the glorious productions of Raphael. But if the extremes in taste were compared, it would be an evident absurdity to try to reconcile them by declaring that the taste of Locke or Aristotle was equalled in delicacy and correctness by that of a Patagonian or a Bushman of South Africa; and it would be no less absurd to declare that a rude bust which is sometimes seen at an inn-door is equal to the sublime productions of the chisel of Angelo. Hence it is apparent there must be some definite standard, or some universal, fundamental basis, by which we are enabled to declare the superiority of one man's taste over another's. Hence, as taste enables us to judge of beauty, it is apparent that this standard of comparison can be so vitiated as to preclude all perceptions of beauty in the true sense of the term. No description of eloquence harmonizes with the taste of the Asiatic as well as an ostentatious parade of ornament; while the Greek, looking with contempt on this artificial show, perceives beauty only in what is delicate and chaste. In the earlier period of the world, Grecian style of architecture was considered beautiful; subsequently, the Gothic style elicited admiration; but another revolution in taste occurred, and the Grecian architecture was considered to be superior in beauty. Similar revolutions have taken place in the literary world. In the reign of Charles II. no kind of literature was patronized but that in which affected splendour was mistaken for wit. Obscure and ambiguous sentimental structure were considered brilliant scintillations of genius, and sonorous combinations of words were admired as eloquence.

Taste may be literally applied to the physical organs, or figuratively to the internal faculties. In both acceptations of the term, examples of vitiated taste are common. The Bushmen of South Africa anoint their bodies with grease in the lowest state of putrefaction. The Icelander eats decomposed fat, and drinks

the oil of the whale. The belles of some barbarous climes perceive great beauty in painting their teeth black. The ladies of other uncivilized nations have depending from their noses huge brass ornaments, while those of more civilized (?) countries spread rouge on their cheeks. Taste, in its figurative application, is equally vitiated. The most beautiful theorem in mathematics would appear to some a repulsive combination of unintelligible signs of letters and diagrams; the most interesting principle in science would be void of all attraction; while some would bow at the shrine of the common novels of the day, and ecstatically read the rhapsody of some love-sick soul, dying for the light of a dark-eyed maid, as delineated by some; and they would leave the choice gems of literature to be swallowed in the stream of Lethe. It seems almost impossible that such degraded qualities of mind should distinguish the nineteenth century. The march of reform has much yet to accomplish. But even if we do assert that taste is arbitrary, we must dispute the mental development of those who prefer wordy rhymes to the brilliant ideas of Miltonic numbers. Those who maintain that all taste is arbitrary, declare it has no right or wrong phase; but that this quality, enabling man to judge of beauty, is a definite standard to which he can appeal when any one advances a different opinion. Others affirm that what some conceive to be the wrong side of taste has no connexion with it in the true sense of the term, and that only the cultivated mind possesses the power of perceiving beauty in the more occult departments of nature and art; for how can the untutored intellect behold beauty in what it can neither see nor understand? Therefore we may conclude that taste is a function of the mind which enables us to perceive beauty in the departments of literature, science, nature, and the arts; and in proportion as this taste is cultivated by education, the more competent are we to judge of beauty as it figuratively or literally exists.

THE TWO PICTURES.

PICTURE THE FIRST.

I.

IF the reader has ever visited the Vatican, he will remember the two beautiful pictures which hang there, with no other title attached to them than that of "Florio," the name of the artist who painted them. There are other pictures of this master scattered through the various galleries and private collections of Europe, and they all partake of a high transcendental character. Florio was a poet-painter in the strict sense of the term; for although he possessed the power of a magician as a mere colourist, yet he would at any time have sacrificed all the exterior qualities of the painter, if he could thereby succeed in the embodiment of a great idea. He lived only for thoughts, he constantly sought to grasp the beautiful, and would, in the fervent enthusiasm of his soul, have wandered barefoot to all the ends of the earth, if by that means he could expand the aesthetic life which burned within him; the perception of that which lies within beauty, and of which all outward loveliness is but the shell and symbol. Thus it is that all his pictures have a wild, imaginative expression, a power over the beholder which insensibly roots him to the spot; for he did not paint rainbows and flowers with sepia and carmine, but he ground men and women up into colours, and fixed their souls indelibly on his canvas, that they might remain there for ever, and speak in accents which should touch the hearts of all who beheld them.

The two pictures we have mentioned are breathing types of this ideal, and together embody the whole mind of the painter: the one stands for the Beautiful, and the other for the Terrible. The first is the picture of an angel, the second of a savage fiend.

Although nearly two hundred years have passed since they were painted, they still wear a freshness and a fulness of colour, as if even Time, who crumbles all things between his bony fingers, had feared to touch these, and so had carried them across the deep abyss of two broad centuries, with no other hurt than by investing them with a brown foggy atmosphere, which, so far from diminishing their beauty, rather added to the be-

witching mystery which played about them.

The story of these two pictures has been obtained from the fragmentary papers and diaries of Florio, which were discovered some years after his death by Giacomo Pelligni, and is as follows:—From the first awakening of the love of beauty in the heart of the painter, he had conceived that the whole creation was the representation of two great ideas—beauty and terror. He might have been wrong, but it is more probable that the young and ardent student had thoughts and revealings such as could not be expressed in words, and thus we are disabled from entering, as it were, into his mind, and perceiving and thinking from thence. In his youth he sought out all the wild mountain passes and the dark ravines, to listen to the babblings of the air, and the verses of the green things of the earth, and to woo the spirit of beauty at her own shrine. In the flower and the moss, in the dewdrop and the star, he saw the expression of ideal beauty in unceasing renewal; and in the dark caves and overhanging precipices, and in the black tempests of the midnight ocean, the terrible was ever ready to commune with him, and he fed his soul from day to day on the wild imagery of nature. He had no companions in his wanderings; he carried no sketching pencil; for when he saw the worshipped idols of his life, the picture painted itself upon his heart, and would never after be effaced. "I will paint my soul," he said, "and fix for ever on the blank wall of the world the archetype of that which lives within me; of that out of which all things in the universe are compounded; of that which looks out in the morning star, and which gazes back at itself from the chalice of the unsunned flower; of that whose voice is music, whose breath is May fragrance, whose look is the aurora of the summer dawn, whose pathway is the rainbow, and whose temple is the star-beaded universe. This has its other self, its demon or shadow; as the old poets thought sometimes in their dreams, but were too weak to realize; it pulses double, and lives its dual life. Its utterances on this side are made in the yell of the strangled criminal—in the last groan of a giant, when stricken with the plague—in the clash of arms, when blood flows in an unrighteous

cause—in the earthquake, in the thunder, and in the midnight wailing of the waves. Its visage is seen in the madness of despair—its shadow haunts the wicked in conscience—and its exponent to all the world is death. Man's heart has two sides; on one side is engraved the semblance of the first, on the other, the image of the second."

II.

There was a broad river rolling with a stately motion to the sea, and seated on a mossy bank beside the flowing waters was a child—a very young child. A little, tender heart was palpitating in the child's breast, and a soul fresh from heaven, and yet untainted with the reeking odours of this sinful world, was playing like summer twilight upon its gentle face. Its eyes seemed, in their large, full gaze, like windows out of which heaven itself could look, and from which the spirit of all beauty seemed continually to pour fresh streams of power, as if to kindle all the universe with ineffable benediction, and to make nature throe with joy. The child smiled; oh! God himself had wrought those features with his very hands, else whence that smile so full and rich in the fruition of unspeakable beauty? The child still smiled, and gazed fondly, but spoke not; and Florio sat entranced by its silent loveliness, and was so deeply moved by the serene light which rested calmly on its features, that he was silent too. He began to dream, as he had dreamed before,—“there were angels on the earth in the times of old, and why not angels now? Humanity never gave birth to such a form as that; it is a soul which has left its home of summer blooms, and has wandered to this dull star, under the spell of an odorous dream:—it is the soul of Beauty come hither, in answer to the prayers of anguish which I have made at matin, at vesper, and in summer shine: it is my passionate wild love, the spirit of my dreams and reveries, now in the semblance of life's first dawn, but holier than that has ever been before. My pencil—I must paint it, or I shall go mad!”

III.

There was a peasant trimming his garden, and a woman working at her spinning wheel beneath the grateful shade of a trellised vine. There was a humble cottage, boasting neither of beauty in its architecture, nor of the spaciousness of

its extent. Its roof was low, its walls were of clay, its porch was rudely constructed, and its whole aspect spoke more of labour than of wealth. But it was a home, and wherever there is a home there is poetry, there is soul, there is beauty, and the expression of a sentiment which outvalues all the conventionalities of the world. The man was a husband, the woman was a wife and a mother. She had one child, a boy, but more heavenly than human, in the fresh divinity of his young and guileless heart. It was a joy to these parents to know that God had blessed the fond love which had united them together with this confiding image of himself, and to them the world had but one hope, and all that hope was living in their gentle boy. It was their lot to toil, but to toil they had been born; they had been visited by sorrow, but they put their trust in God, and thanked Him for this one blessing, this benediction and pledge of their trusting hearts, this offspring and centre of their dear affections; and the living, breathing hope of a futurity to be made redolent with the fragrance of one long summer—the fruition of those anticipations which were now in their budding bloom. If their lot had been one of gloom, light had fallen out of heaven, and they were the parents of a child. The sun went down, and twilight came. The river rolled along as steadfastly as heretofore. The little birds which dwelt among the tall grass and sedges on the banks were coming one by one, to rest them, till a new morning should call them with its golden light, to sing again and be glad. The flowers in the meads were drooping their heads, as though in sorrow that so fair a day should have an end, and their eyes were gushing with silent tears as they saw the shadows of darkness come to steep the world in gloom, and to enfold the blue with dusky curtains. The child had gone like a young bird to its parent nest, and had laid its cherub form upon its tiny couch. And within the walls of the little cottage the spirit of beauty had a sacred home.

And when the stars came out gradually one by one, glittering in dim streaks, and broad sheets of sparkling fire, until all the deep blue heaven seemed to rain down golden tears, the mother sat watching at the bedside of her infant son, and gazing upon the little rosy lips, which appeared like the first glimmerings of one long summer-day of smiles, and upon the two dove-like eyes which were opened with a

full and lustrous gaze upon her, although their senses were asleep; and with the benignant emotions of maternal love her heart beat, and her faltering spirit found a current for its utterance in refreshing tears. She sobbed with excess of joy, and his mother's tears fell upon the sleeping infant's angel face.

IV.

The room was dark, the time was midnight, the air was still, the sky without was sprinkled all over with golden lights; and the painter paced to and fro in the magic spell of the deep thoughts which possessed him. He did not dream now, he was a real earnest man when surrounded by the welcome shades of darkness, but the daylight was a blinding glare, and dazzled and confused him; and in the broad sunshine his faculties were so enveloped in a trance, that he was as a sleeper walking. He talked to himself, or to the pictures which hung around upon the walls. "Before the sun shall reach the west to-morrow the half of my idol shall breathe at the tip of my pencil. When I was a boy I once fell into a deep, dark, yawning cavern, and as I fell I saw the face of an angel gazing on me, and I stopped in my descent. I found myself lying in the sun upon the soft bed of a golden meadow; and as I gazed upon the blue flowers beside me, and wondered if the angel face was lurking there, I saw a grim ghastly devil staring at me with his blood-shot eyes, and the sound of clanking chains seemed ringing in the air. It was a day-dream! I once was drowned in the deep waters of the Tiber, and as I sank down and down into the deep, deep, slimy bed, a voice seemed to echo from some lower deep, saying, 'Paint it there, it is the type of all humanity: the good and evil form the cycle of the rounding life. Thy brother is the first, thy brother is the second;' and then a sweeter voice above me said, 'The two stand far apart, and yet they meet in one centre, thou art that centre.' That was a dream. I was in the sunshine when I dreamt that, and I saw an angel and a fiend together in the blue sky, and I said, 'Wherefore hath a fiend permission to ascend so high?' and the angel said, 'It is my future, the time will come when I shall fall; this is my other self, and I was only born for thee!' I mingled that with my dream, although I was struggling and suffocating,

and could only pray to die, as my spirit grappled with the snake-like waters."

Florio paced his chamber till the stars without grew dim, and a soft grey light, like a dreamy cloud, or the dim memory of a half-forgotten friendship, stole with a steady march into the silent room. As the light grew apace, strange forms came starting into life around, and the very walls seemed to live and breathe, and only waiting to be beckoned by the hand, that they might think and speak. "The sleeping virgin never pointed the way to my heaven, although I painted her with upraised hand, as token of her blissful dream. Though her velvet cheek had a fairer blush than this new dawn which breaks above the east; though the silken tangles of her jetty hair were flashing with pearls and jewels like a cataract of darkness; though her rich full eyes (now closed in the dewy softness of sleep) were beaming with excess of soul, as though their orbs had drunk in lightning; even then she would not be my ideal, and could not utter that which lies within me. The spirit of beauty comes but once to greet the anxious gaze of the awakening soul, and what I saw in the rosy light of yesterday shall live again upon my canvas to-day."

And as the painter worked steadfastly, the calm angel face of the child came forth again like a sweet vision to gaze upon him, and at each new stroke it grew still fresher into life; and as the painter's eyes met the soft full beauty of its smile, and the tender expression of its heaven-beaming eyes, a thrill of ecstasy shot through his frame, his heart beat loud, and his fingers trembled with excitement.

"It was beauty which, in olden time, severed the tongue of the Samian wrestler, and taught him how to speak; it was beauty that lured Narcissus to the river brink, and there having beheld the image of his own soul, which was beauty's child, he died in peace. She is the Medea to the *Æson* of the world's ages, and has the gift of childhood for the true. It was beauty which infused the violets' blood into the worn heart of Ajax; and though like Alcesta, we are within the gulf of hell, she has power to bring us back. I am her prophet and representative, and I have her living symbol here."

"We live to grow more perfect by approaching more and more to the two ideas of nature. When the soul makes its advent into this world, it seeks for beauty as its own inheritance. It is the

dancing meteor of our daily life, the light which flickers over the wide marsh of human existence, and if we are not true, it tracks us on and on, and then eludes the grasp, leaving us disheartened and spirit-broken, amid the shattered meshes of a wilderness of sorrow. What we see and feel in our daily experience are the materials out of which our system of aesthetics is deduced; and hence those who have wandered from the only path on which light has ever shone, have nothing left but to bemoan their fate, and to curse the desire which overstepped their imbecility. But in all this round world of moving and dancing lights, from off of which fall eternally the beaded drops of fate, there are still ideal embodiments of the two great presentments of nature:—Life and Death—Regeneration and Destruction—Good and Evil—the Beautiful and the Terrible! The one is the other; the other is the one: each is at the other's farthest end, and where they meet is Being. To me is given the task to sever and recombine them, as the English philosopher has just shown that the red and the blue rays are but the opposite sides of a beam of white light. Beauty is the animated soul which keeps the green world in the fair morning of unceasing genesis, and sheds new light upon the starry pathway of the midnight gloom. Beauty is the pervading force whence all things draw their life, as from a fountain which can never become dry: all things flow back to this for renewal of their primal impulse, and the centre of all things in the universe is here. This is the light which falls out of heaven, and which makes flowers of fragrance to grow within the heart. God has uttered but two words, and they are these:—Life and Death; Death and Life. God has but two servants, and they are these:—Life and Death, Death and Life; and these are the Beautiful and the Terrible. The promise which lives upon the brink of each new soul has its fulfilment in these, and the remembrances of every spirit centre in these presiding powers. When we look forward through the rosy atmosphere of hope we see life's onward path glowing with hilarity and mirth; but when we glance back through the leaden sky of experience upon the actual days and hours, we find only one word inscribed upon the horizon—'false,' and the odours which come up from those dark valleys are of poppies and hemlocks, which grow on banks of ashes. In the

one is my first idea, in the other is its wedded bride; in the two conjoined am I, and all the world, and that, and that alone, I live to paint."

V.

As the little child slept in his little bed, he dreamed a dream. There was a dying child beside him, and an angel who stood by said to him, "that other is thyself." And now there was a wailing sound of anguish and of broken hearts, and a flickering light came struggling through chinks in a cold stone wall. There was a man of terror lying there, with his hair matted and clotted with blood, and his limbs manacled with chains, and the child's heart was filled with fear. And the angel stood there and said, "that other is thyself;" and then the child was seated upon a green hillock looking at the sky, and a young man passed by and directed his keen glance upon him; and now a cry of woe arose within the cottage, and the child saw a spirit, like his father, carried up by the angel into a bright star. And his father's spirit looked at him, and his eyes let fall a tear. And then he saw his mother's shadow leaning over her sleeping son, and she stooped and kissed him once, and the angel came and carried her away to the bright star which burned above. And the little child awoke, and it was morning; and the golden light came flowing in broad waves through the casement of the room, and the mother was there, and she smiled and kissed her boy.

VI.

Florio stands in his studio gazing on the setting sun, and *the First Picture is finished.*

PICTURE THE SECOND.

I.

TWENTY-FIVE years had rolled their tide into the dreamy abyss of the past, and the earth was still green in the sunshine, and still wore its rich mantle of flowers. Twenty-five years! how many had lived and died during that short period; how many hearts had been broken; how many more had been broken in all the quarter-centuries which had rolled away since time began! Too many, sooth to tell! Florio stood in his studio gazing upon a

picture of an angel. "It speaks to me," he said, "and in that soft gaze have I an inlet to my ideal world. We look on grass and flowers, on blue waters and moving skies, on the spring glimmerings of green, and the burning hues of autumnal trees, for that which lies beyond them all. We seek, not what they show us, but what they can suggest." A fair girl glided into the room with a movement which was more like the rustling of the evening air, when it plays among the ivies, than aught of human form; and Florio turned his full gaze upon her, and taking her by the hand kissed her tenderly.

"You must leave your pictures, love," she said, "and sit with me in my chamber, while I sing to you."

"Wife," said the painter, "my dear wife, as you love me, disturb me not, for I have thoughts now which I must embody in colour, or my task will never be done."

He stood gazing on the lovely countenance of his wife, and she timidly took him by the hand to lead him away, but he moved not. "Florio, you are going mad; you dream by night and day, you wander from your home, and pass the hours of sunshine in reveries. Have you no love for me?" Florio still gazed upon her, and was speechless. She flung her arms wildly about his neck, and with her lovely head nestling in his bosom, sobbed loud and deep, and gave expression to her anguish in a flood of tears.

"Oh, my fond Mária, is thy little heart so weak as this?" said he, and he kissed her white brow, and led her to a seat.

"When I met thee at the carnival, and saw that God had sent another angel in my path, my heart leaped with joy, and I saw fair troops of lovely forms descending from the sky, and they all shouted in a chorus, 'thy idol is here—take her, she is thine,' and I fell on my knees, and my life seemed narrowing to a point, as the blood came bubbling to my lips, and my every pulse beat with thankfulness to God. And as my vision faded I heard the low murmur of the crowd in that glittering hall, and some said, 'he is mad,' and—curse them—they pitied me. But love, wild passionate love, took possession of my soul, and all the melodies of nature seemed to ring within my heart."

Mária gazed upon him speechless, and as she pushed his wild locks of hair from his forehead with her gentle hands, he said, "Mária, it was my boyish hope to

give form and semblance to the two great ideas of the universe; I sought to ascend by the ladder of created souls to the highest type of beauty, till I should gain the heaven of my thoughts, and rest my head upon the bosom of the Most High God. Dost thou see yonder picture of a child, smiling there like the first blush of a summer dawn? That is the idol of my soul, and it is because I see in your calm, lovely eyes the self-same beauty, the same suggestive symbol of a higher sphere than this, that I cherish you as the only sweet flower that has ever bloomed upon my path. There are your eyes, your smiles—ineffably entrancing as the sunshine of Paradise—your roseate blush, refreshing to my heart as a fountain to the traveller in the wilderness. The Oreads sitting on the green hills' slope, and gazing on the glassy stream, were not so radiant in the deep beauty of the soul's own world as thou. Ah, Mária, when I sit here alone, and count in syllables the close resemblances between you and my picture of the ideal beauty, I come to believe that there is but one form of the all-perfect, all-fair, and that that which smiled upon me by the river's brink, when I was yet a beardless boy, has been preserved in thee; for see, is not that your very face? is not that angel boy the very image of yourself? Could I then do aught but love you? Oh, Love! the centre of all holy affections and all beautiful desires; the motive force pervading all the worlds and starry orbs of night: thou elder than primeval chaos, yet youngest born; thou herald of the moving spheres, when the rosy dawn of time broke on the banks of Eden; before whose snowy altars all pure hearts kneel in adoration.—But stay, I must begone, for yester-morn when I visited the *prigione*, as is my wont, I saw the very incarnation of the terrible, and I must go to-day and gaze upon the wretch."

Mária rose, and walked with trembling step from the room, but when she reached the door she turned back, gazed upon her husband, kissed him fondly, and left the room in tears, while she uttered to herself, "All say that he is mad, and it is true; may the Holy Mother save him!"

II.

There was a dungeon, deep, dark, and cold. Its walls were massive and slimy, and wrinkled and worn by time. The air within was damp, heavy, and almost

putrid. Its roof was low, and the only light it received came from one barred chink in the cold mould-covered wall. On the stone floor lay the last wreck of what had been a man, but now loathsome in aspect, so wild, so lost to all the nobler faculties of humanity, that he seemed less human than fiend-like. He was loaded from head to foot with heavy irons, and was now uttering awful imprecations as he writhed to and fro upon the dungeon floor in the madness of mingled despair and intoxication.

There was a sound of clanging chains and the creaking of hinges and bolts and bars, and the door of the dungeon opened and Florio entered. The jailor followed, and three living souls were together as in a sepulchre.

"Assassino," shouted the jailor, "you will no more *girarsi alla strada*, you will rob no more on the highway: will you receive the benediction of our Holy Mother?"

The wretch answered with a growl, and rolled his body over, while his eyeballs glared, and his mouth foamed as if his last moments were at hand.

"Ten years of crime have erased from the heart of that *ladro cattivo* all traces of humanity; thank our Holy Mother he dies to-morrow," said the jailor.

Florio gazed upon the condemned wretch, and motioned the attendant away.

When the door of the cell had been made fast, and the echoes of the man's footsteps had died away, Florio stooped down over the form which lay writhing in cold chains, and felt a secret joy creep in his heart as he caught the horrible repulsive expression of its brutal features. He rested on one knee above the breathing mass of iniquity, and watched keenly the most minute outline of his visage. "For thirty years," he muttered to himself, "for thirty years have I cherished one great hope, and its consummation is realized at last. Beauty has dawned upon my path, till it seemed as though all things in heaven or earth were but parts of it. I have seen it typified in the calmness of the twilight sea, and have heard its voice in the rich droppings of music which the rain makes in the summer wild. It came once in the semblance of a little child, and I kept that as a living memory in my heart. It came again in a gentle girl, and I wedded her, that the same angel face which smiled upon me from the canvas, should also nestle in my daily life, and cheer my hours with a rosy joy.

But never, never till now, although I have visited this dungeon every morn, and have held communion with nature in the rugged solitudes, where mortal foot, except my own, would never dare to tread, have my eager eyes lighted on the other half of my idol, and the chasm in the spiritual laws and influences by which I am begirt, has never been filled till now. Thou incarnate fiend! thou grinning devil! now as thy life ebbs out, and a dread eternity of pain becomes thy doom, fix that ghastly stare for ever upon my canvas, and become to all the future ages the other side of an angel's face."

III.

Mária was sitting in her chamber alone, and her eyes were swollen with tears. Florio entered, and his wife rose to meet him.

"Husband," she said, "why do you look so wild?"

"My dear wife," replied he, "why do you shed tears?"

She made no reply.

"I am happy," said the painter, "yes, I am happy. My soul has found her mate, the *second Picture is finished!*"

Florio stretched himself upon a couch, and covered his face with his hands. Mária seated herself beside him, and bending her beautiful head above him, faintly whispered, "Florio, I have had a strange dream."

"Life is but a dream, all things are shadows, there is nothing real, the world is a bundle of phantasms and halos, and shifting clouds and melting vapours. Hope itself is but a mirage of the desert. I painted your image before I saw you; if you could float before me in the ideal shapes of earth and air, no wonder but yourself might dream."

Mária heeded not these mutterings, and whispered softly, "I was dreaming of my home—of my mother, who loved me so—of my mother who died; and I was dreaming of the green meadows where I played when young, and when I had a gentle brother, the angel of my mother's heart. And I saw my mother's face smiling upon me in my dream, and I heard my father's voice, and my little brother was there, and he was gathering flowers by the river side; and then I saw him"—and here sorrow checked her words—"I saw him leap headlong down into a dark chasm, and he was dashed to pieces against the rocks." She covered her face with her hands and still wept.

Florio heard her not, he was still muttering to himself—

"It breathes as did the other, and thus the circle is complete. It is the circle which surrounds me and all other men—the circle of fate and of events. My life is complete, my days are counted. I have realized the idea for which I was born. The beautiful and the terrible have found their exponent and representative in me! What were all my wanderings amid dark ravines and skeleton-peopled caves? what were all my visits to the lazardhouse? my time had not come, the wretch was then waiting me in his dread course of crime. Each man casts his own shadow in two forms, as I have seen myself reflected in the fair mirror of a mountain brook with grace and symmetry, and in grim gigantic aspect in the mists above the Alpine snows. There is nothing better than ourselves, and there is nothing worse. This incarnate fiend who has taken shape and colour at the tip of my pencil, although blackened all over with guilt, is only like a bad hour scooped out of my own life. With all his manifold iniquities he is but the blood which moves in my own veins. Truth itself has two sides, on one side is Beauty, on the other Terror; falsehood and error are but part of it, and the lie itself is the sternest truth.

"I can see my picture now, and out of all its devil-like contortions comes the image of its opposing state, as every shadow points in the direction of the sun. As amid the deepest gloom of night there is yet some hope of returning dawn, as the cloud will be followed by sunshine, and the storm by fairest calm; so out of this grim terror comes the majestic beauty of a better world, and these are the two ends of creation; the opposing and conjoining forces, the double-sided nature in her most enchanting mood. There are tempters lying in our path at noonday and at night, the one in the beauty of the sun or the star, the other in the grim realities of daylight sorrow or midnight crime, and each has a home in every human heart. The two together form the thread on which the worlds are strung as beads. Without the thunder-storm or tempest the earth would have no garniture of flowers. What are hideous dreams, but our own sins lighted up and transformed into phantasms of terror? Both come gleaming upon me from the burial aisles of the Past and the dawning genesis of the Future, the one soothing and calm, like a spell of poppies and sleep, the other

cankering and fierce, like a fire of scorpion stings. I see the one in the night, when heaven pours down its cataracts of light, and the other when morning breaks with lurid portents and with raging storms. And out of all the truths of my life come sharp and piercing, like the pointed glaciers which shoot up between the rivings of the crags in the sunless solitudes of the mountain paths—Maria, I am faint—I am not dreaming—the world may say that I am mad, but I am still a man, and love you tenderly."

IV.

Florio had returned to the cell of the condemned to gaze once more upon the man whose doom it was to die upon the morrow. The criminal was seated upon the low bench which occupied one side of the cell, and his chains seemed to hang heavily upon him. When the painter entered, the man cast a savage glance upon him, and folding his arms together, moaned as though his soul would burst with penitence. The picture was brought by an attendant, and Florio took it into his hands, and stood surveying the relative expressions of the image and the reality. Florio looked mildly upon the doomed wretch, and showing him the picture, said—

"Look, I painted that when you were lying there insensible."

The man gazed upon it, and groaned as though his heart would break.

"I scorn thee not, I love thee, for thou wert born for me," said the painter; but the man heeded not his wandering speech, but sat with his eyes riveted upon the picture of himself.

At length he broke out into one long sobbing groan, and muttered almost inaudibly, "Oh God, that I should come to this, and so soon too! Ah! I was not always so. I was once a child, and had a mother who loved me," and his utterance was choked by grief. He struggled with the deep emotions of his breast, and tears came to his relief.

The painter stood gazing on him intently, and with the picture still in his hands. "Every fiend was once a child, and had a mother, or how else had he been born," he said to himself.

The man struggled hard with the memories which seemed to be awakened within him, and looking up with his hollow, glaring eyes, and emaciated features, he shrieked wildly, "Oh, for the

sake of my mother, do not spurn me, for I feel now that I shall die within this narrow cell, before my time comes to be dragged forth by the executioner." He fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands in prayer.

Florio was riveted to the spot. "They are both even here," he said, "so black a wretch as this can pray; the angel and the devil are conjoined."

The criminal looked up, and meeting the benign expression of the painter's face, and the calm benevolence which seemed to issue from his eyes, like a ray of sunshine from within his heart, beckoned him to sit beside him.

The painter sat upon the bench, and put forth his hand; the other grasped it, and they clung together in an embrace, as two loving children in their sleep.

"I shall die before the sun sets, although in this dark cell his setting is unknown to me," said the man in chains; "and through all my years of crime and sorrow, you are the only man in whose eyes I could read compassion for a sinner."

"You were not born and nurtured in crime," said the painter; "tell me your history."

"I will," answered the other, and his voice was again suppressed by grief. "I will," he resumed. "I was once a child, and my parents loved me, oh! how my mother loved me, and watched me in my sleep. It was in a little cottage, by the green banks of the Adda, that my early years were spent. My mother—oh, she is in heaven now, and my father is in heaven too; I saw them go there in my dream: and I saw myself go down into a black, sulphurous pit to keep company with fiends; and my sister, she was not so old as I: she was a tender babe when I was strong, and I carried her across the water on my back. But my mother—my mother died, the world was no more a home for me; and I—I loved, but met with scorn. I sought revenge and became thenceforth an outcast. I wandered up and down the world, and like a wild beast left to famish, preyed upon myself. I robbed, lied, gamed, cheated, murdered, and now I am here;" he lifted up his head, and looked round the harsh stone walls of the cell. "Ah, my mother, and my sister, and my home are gone, and I am here: but there is something in my throat, I shall die;" his features underwent such strange contortions, and his eye flashed with such a terrible glare, that Florio sprang to his

feet and stood aghast. He put his hand into his bosom and drew forth a small box, and placed it tremblingly in the painter's hands. Florio was about to open it and ascertain its contents, but the man motioned him to conceal it.

The fit passed off, and he again implored Florio to listen. "Am I the fiend you make me there?" he said, pointing to the picture.

"It is yourself," replied the painter.

"Oh, my mother and my sister, and my home, and the green banks where I played when an innocent child. I can see it all as in a dream, and I can see a youth with noble brow and black flowing locks of hair, gazing upon me as I sit at play. I told my mother, and I dreamed of it at night." He turned his dying glance full upon the painter, and pressing his hand to his burning brow, he asked, "Didst thou ever gaze upon a child at play?"

Florio started, and looked upon his picture, and again upon the man.

"It is so, thou art the man;" and he fell back, as another convulsion seized him, and his mouth was covered with a roasty foam. The jailor entered to summon him to his last prayer: but the prayer he had lately offered was his last; for he was now struggling with the cold embraces of death. His body writhed to and fro, and his teeth worked convulsively. He was still, he stretched himself out upon his back, his eyes closed, he muttered, "My mother, my mother, my sister," and so he died.

Florio started up, seized his picture, and hurried to his home.

V.

The sun was going down, and the heavens were bathed in liquid sheets of crimson flame, and the rich hues of an Italian sunset streamed into the painter's studio, and lighted up the pictured walls with a strange and mysterious lustre. Florio and Mária were gazing on two pictures; the one was the image of an angel, the other of a fiend.

"Yes, my fond Mária," he said, "it is a tale of sorrow."

"It cannot be the same," she replied, "oh no, it cannot be."

"Verily, it is, and now, even now, the image of his youth lingers about his eyes like the melting shadow of a twilight dream. Yes, the one is heaven, the other is darkness and guilt; we live between

them both—time connects them, and they are both locked up in each living heart. Oh, those eyes, so lustrous once in all their heaven-flashing beauty, were gazing upwards when I saw the child, and I hastened home, and it lived there upon the canvas, to cheer my heart. But now, ah! now—the angel smile which dwelt upon those lips, the smile of love, fresh with the morning dew of life, is fled, fled for ever; and they are now pallid and curled up with parching words and imprecations. Here, take the packet; he gave it me before he died."

Mária opened the small box which Florio had received from the criminal, and as she drew forth a small locket, and caught sight of what was painted on it, she shrieked, and fell into her husband's arms.

"What, Mária! what, what concerns you so?"

"It is my mother, my mother!" and she heaved a deep sigh, and fainted in the painter's arms. He laid her upon a couch beneath the open window, and watched her as she revived. The locket had fallen on the floor, and Florio stooped to pick it up, and he then saw the picture of a fair woman, in the summer of life's prime, and wearing the serene expression of his Mária's face. He turned it over, and on the other side was the name "Donato;" he felt as if it were the greatest boon to die just then, and he gasped out, "It is so—I see it all."

"Look here, Mária, that is thy brother—that wretch is thy brother, that smiling angel is thy brother; the dawn which is breaking there upon its lovely brow has broken in a day of fearful storms, and sunk into an evening of woe and sorrow. The day of his life is the circle of all the laws of God, the mingling of all the

elements of loveliness and strife—the gathering of all the opposing forces which hedge in the daily actions of men, and which expands and expands, and forms the untold cycle of eternity."

Mária took the portrait from his hand, and kissed it with impassioned energy. On the back, she read her own maiden name, "Donato." "Oh, my poor brother, it was he whom you saw in the prison, it was he whom you painted as a fiend—my poor brother, who carried me in his arms before my mother died—my fond brother, who loved me so, and whom I thought was dead. Oh! Florio, my grief is too much for me; I cannot bear it."

"Nay, Mária," he said, "thy poor brother is in heaven, for his heart prayed for forgiveness even upon the brink of death, and as he was an angel once, so will he be an angel again." He stooped and kissed his wife, and folded her gentle head upon his breast. "Mária, my wildest dreams were never so dread as these stern realities; there are no dreams, all things are real, and personify the Beautiful and the Terrible. Oh, my blood grows chill and frosty, there is darkness, and the earth shrinks from me; the heaven is like a waving sea, and dark foaming billows seem threatening to engulf me. There is a sound as of a solemn bell tolling in the sky, to urge me on my mission. I must away to seek for Beauty and its grim companion, Terror. But stay, my head burns, my brain reels: Mária, I am here; the pictures are painted, your brother is here, and your mother is here; they are living here in breathing forms, while their spirits haunt the green avenues of a better world, and we will sleep peaceful and calm, with these old memories for our daily companions."

ON THE KING ; OR, CANONICAL AND MORAL BOOKS
OF THE CHINESE.

PART II.

THE fourth book of the Great King, the *Li-Ki*, consists of forty-nine chapters, seventeen only of which are considered authentic: they treat principally of the Chinese ritual, and of different moral obligations. This book is especially valuable from the information which it contains upon the religion, government, laws, and manners and customs of the ancient Chinese, from the birth of the monarchy to the fifth century before the Christian era. It throws also some very curious light upon the minute regulations respecting the duties of filial piety.

"A well-bred son," it says, "does not lodge in the middle room, nor seat himself in the centre of the mat, nor pass through the centre of the doorway. A son deeply imbued with filial piety hears his father and his mother, though they speak not; and sees them, without being in their presence. A son possesses nothing of his own during the lifetime of his parents; he cannot even expose his life for his friend. The murderer of your father must not remain under heaven with you; you must not lay aside your arms while the assassin of your brother is still in life; and you must not inhabit the same kingdom with the murderer of your friend. A son who walks abroad with his father must keep at the distance of one pace behind him, and must have the air of following, rather than of accompanying him. The younger brother must pay the same respect to his elder. At cock-crow in the morning, the children and daughters-in-law must proceed to the chamber of the father and mother, present them with water to wash their hands, hand them their clothes, take up the bolster, roll up the mat, water the chamber, &c. When the father and mother desire to retire to rest, the children and the daughters-in-law attend upon them to serve them. The eldest son must present the mat, and inquire on which side of the alcove they desire to repose; the youngest must unroll the mattress, &c. A son who is employed in any public office, and is lodged apart from his parents, must come every morning to inquire what they wish to eat. At sunrise he may proceed to his daily employment, but in the evening he must

return to salute his father and mother. When they are at table, the children and daughters-in-law stand beside them, and remain thus until the end of the repast to serve them. If the father is dead, the eldest son is at the head of the others to serve his mother."

But the following precepts go too far, because they reduce to rules what ought to be the voluntary and spontaneous effect of the disposition of the mind; and are besides calculated to encourage hypocrisy or affectation, much worse than indifference:—

"When a father or mother is ill, the son neglects his hair, is embarrassed in his mien, and absent in his speech; he must not handle any musical instrument; he must eat without appetite, drink without relish, smile very seldom, and possess not sufficient strength to display anger.

"A son whose father has just expired, is, as it were, thunderstruck; he resembles a man absorbed in his thoughts, who can neither advance nor retire. When the corpse is placed in the coffin, his haggard eyes are fixed on no particular object; he is as a lost man anxiously seeking what he despairs of finding. At the funeral he possesses neither mien nor countenance; he is as a man ready to sink to the earth on witnessing the destruction of all his earthly hopes."

It can hardly be supposed that practices thus minutely prescribed will not degenerate into mere grimace, and that it be not with this religion of son and parent as with several others, all the less pure in worship, in ratio as they are overladen with forms and ceremonies.

Yet we find that the Chinese legislator is careful to place bounds to macerations and to despair. "The severity of mourning must not," he says, "be carried to the extent of a too rigorous maceration, or to the enfeebling of the sight or hearing. If the mourner has a wound in the head, it may be washed; if overheated, he can take the bath; if in ill-health, he may eat meat and drink wine; but the observances of mourning must be resumed so soon as his health is reinstated: to neglect these observances would be to outrage nature and abjure filial piety.

Should the mourner have attained the age of fifty years, he is not obliged to carry the abstinence of woe to maceration. At sixty he must, on the contrary, strictly avoid such a proceeding, and retrench but little from his accustomed style of living; at seventy, it is sufficient that he wear the mourning habiliments; he can eat meat and drink wine, and sleep in his ordinary apartment."

In China the mourning for a father lasts three years; several passages of the *Li-Ki* recal this usage.

Tsea-Tchang asks if it is true, as has been reported in the *Chou-King*, that Ko-Soung had passed three years without speaking; and until the expiration of that time had not resumed the management of state affairs. "Yes, doubtless," replies Confucius; "and so ought it to be. In ancient times, on the death of the Emperor, the heir-apparent never meddled with the Government or state affairs during the three years of mourning, but left the care of the empire entirely to his minister." With all due deference to Confucius, it seems to us that the memory of good princes would have been far better honoured by an entirely opposite line of conduct.

We have but little to say of the *Yo-King*, or King of Music, the last of the canonical books of the first class. This book is entirely lost, but a beautiful fragment of it has been preserved in the *Li-Ki*, which we here subjoin:—

"In the temples, and in the ancestral halls, music ought equally to inspire religion in the prince and the subject, in the great and the small; in the public feasts and the assemblies of relatives, condescension and politeness in old and young; in families and households, love and tenderness between parents and children, between the younger and the elder brethren. The more closely do we examine music, the more certainty do we acquire that its sole end, whether in what forms its essence or its mere accessories, is to draw closer the ties which unite the father to the son, the prince to the subject, mankind to one another."

All the information we possess relative to the *Yo-King* is confined to the bare knowledge that it was taught in the schools, that its canticles were sung in the religious ceremonies, and that the musicians were obliged to learn it by heart. It is generally supposed that this monument of the Chinese religion was destroyed by the sects of Fo and Tao-

tze, when they became all-powerful at court.

Of the nine canonical books of the second order, entitled the *Little King*, five only, whether by their authenticity or the importance and interest of the matter they contain, merit our attention. These are the *Ta-hio* (Great Science), the *Tchong-yong* (Middle Course), the *Lun-yu* (Book of Sentences), the *Meng-tsen* (so called from the name of its author, Meng-tsen, or Mencius, the most celebrated of the disciples of Confucius, and the Plato of this other Socrates), and lastly, the *Hiao-King*, or Book of Filial Piety.

The first four books bear the collective title of *See-tchou*, or the Four Books *par excellence*. They contain the doctrine of Confucius, not written by himself, but recorded by his disciples. Sometimes the *See-tchou* is printed without a commentary, and the children learn it by heart. Sometimes we find a literal explication adjoined to the text, with which the memories of the children are equally charged. In other editions the same page presents at one view the text and a paraphrase written in the high conversational style, for the use of men of the world. Finally, for scholars there are library editions, in which are found the different commentaries, contrasted and compared with each other almost in the style of our *variorum* editions.

The *Ta-hio*, that everlasting object of Chinese admiration, on account of the concise and picturesque elegance of its style and the beauty of its doctrine, has long since been known in Europe through the medium of the French Jesuits: we subjoin a few passages which will serve to give an idea of the work.

"True wisdom consists in enlightening the mind and purifying the heart, in loving men, and in making them love virtue; in overcoming every obstacle in our search after the sovereign good, and, when found, in attaching ourselves to it alone.

"Happy the man who knows the end towards which tends his earthly course! The path which he is to pursue lies ready marked out before him; so soon as he enters on this path, perplexity and doubt flee away, while peace and tranquillity cause a thousand fragrant blossoms to spring beneath his footsteps; truth enlightens him with its purest rays; all the virtues enter at the same time into his soul, and with these virtues the joy and delight of pure felicity. But misfortune to the man who, taking the branches for

the roots, the leaves for the fruits, confounds the essential with the accessories, and distinguishes not the means from the end! To know the order of one's duties, and to appreciate their importance, is the beginning of wisdom."

A second extract from the *Ta-hio* will suffice for our interest and curiosity. "In order to govern a nation a man must be well able to rule a family. To be incapable of teaching a family, and yet be capable of instructing a nation of men! that cannot be; whilst the eminently good man, without quitting his own house, and with the simple doctrines which are applied to the policy of a family, will be capable of perfecting the instruction of a people. The duty we owe to our parents is similar to that which is due from us to our prince; fraternal duty is that which but beseemeth us towards our superiors; and the tenderness due to our children is that which ought to be extended to the people."

The ode *Kang-kao* says:—"A prince ought to protect and nourish his people, as a mother does her child. When the ingenuous heart of the infant ardently desires something, although the mother cannot at first precisely discover of what it has need, she is soon however able to determine.

"When families are virtuous, the nation becomes virtuous; when families are courteous and polite, the nation is courteous and polite. When individuals are greedy and perverse, the nation is reduced to anarchy. Such are the first influences of things. This is what is expressed in the following proverb: One word ruins an affair; in the same way one man determines the state of an entire nation."

The *Ta-hio* here places its finger on the plague-spot of all absolute governments. At each new reign, good or bad, all things have to begin afresh. Hence, into what a chaos is a nation plunged when, by the overthrow of natural order, the wills of all are submitted to the caprice of one individual.

We will pass over the *Tchong-yong*, or middle course, a treatise relating to the degree of moderation which a wise man ought to preserve under all circumstances of life; and also the *Lun-yu*, or book of sentences, a collection of the sentiments of Confucius and his disciples, upon virtue, good works, and the art of governing wisely, as these treatises are little more than reproductions of the moral reflections contained in the preceding works; we will then proceed at once to the *Meng-tsen*, of

which work Du Halde, one of the French Jesuit missionaries, has given a very extended analysis in the second volume of his "Description de la Chine."

The *Meng-tsen* consists of a variety of dialogues, having for their object the praises of some princes and the condemnation of others; their purpose also is to show in what consists the goodness of human nature, and to refute the pernicious errors of certain sectarists.

The second chapter of the first part contains the conversations of King Siuen-Vang with Meng-tsen, or Mencius.

"They record," says the king, "that the park of Prince Van-Vang had a circumference of seventy furlongs, and the people found it too small: mine has but forty furlongs, and the people consider it too large. To what are we to attribute these different judgments of the people?"

"I will inform you," replies Mencius. "It was permitted to every one to enter the park of Van-Vang, and to take from thence wood and vegetables, as well as to hunt the hares and pheasants; the entry was denied to none. This is why the people found it too small. When I entered your states I informed myself of the usages of your kingdom. They replied to me that you had a park of forty furlongs in circumference, that the entry was strictly interdicted to all your subjects; and that if an individual were so rash as to put his foot within it, and kill or wound one of your deer, he would be punished as severely as if he had killed or wounded a man. Can you feel astonished after this that your people think it too large?"

On another occasion, the prince having admitted Mencius into his pleasure-palace, says to him: "Is there anything incompatible in this delicious spot with the wisdom of which a king ought to make profession?" "No," replies Mencius, "provided that a king's joy is also that of his subjects, and their sorrow his. If he partakes with his people their joys and their sorrows, his people will in turn partake with him his pleasures and his pains. It is by these means that a kingdom is well governed."

"The ancient emperors," pursues Mencius, "made every twelve years the circuit of their tributary kingdoms; this visit was termed 'the inspection.' Every six years the tributary kings repaired to the court of their emperor to render account of their conduct, and of the manner in which they administered justice in their several states. In the same way, the em-

peror in his district, and the kings in their kingdoms, made half-yearly visits; the first in the spring, in order to examine if the earth had been tilled and sown, and wherever there was a scarcity of grain for this purpose, a sufficient quantity was furnished from the public granaries. The second took place in the autumn and harvest time, and if the produce of this harvest proved insufficient for the needs of all, the public granaries were thrown open to the people.

"A very different line of conduct is pursued now. The princes certainly make the circuits of their kingdoms, but how do they make them? They march with an escort of nearly three thousand soldiers, who consume the greater portion of the provisions required for the subsistence of the poor people. We see these people perishing for want of the necessities of life. Can we feel astonished if they have rage in their hearts, and if, in the state of oppression under which they groan, they seek to console themselves by murmurs and invectives against their prince? I place before you the conduct of the ancient kings, and that pursued by the princes of the present day; it is for you to determine which of the two you desire to resemble."

In the fourth chapter of the second part, Mencius lays it down as a principle, that a wise man who has no employment at court, ought not to go thither, even should the king send to seek him.

To this his disciple objects, that the subject who should be commanded by his king to go to the wars, would be obliged to obey, and that in the same manner a wise man with whom his king desired to converse ought to obey his sovereign's mandate.

"There is this difference," replies Mencius; "for, for what reason, do you imagine, does a king desire to see and converse with a wise man? It is in order to profit by his learning; to consult him in affairs of difficulty or danger; to hear, and if possible follow, his advice; he regards him then as his master, and himself as his disciple. But do the laws of modesty and decency permit a disciple to send for his master? And would not the master sin against these laws if he obeyed a similar command? A prince does not degrade himself in paying a visit to a master of wisdom, because he observes the prescribed ceremonies which enjoin disciples thus to comport themselves towards their masters. A prince desirous

of profiting by the conversation of a sage, yet failing in the observance of this law of good breeding and deference, acts as if he invited him to enter his house and then closed the door in his face."

"But," rejoins the disciple, "I have read that Confucius, on being summoned by the King of Lou, hurried forthwith to the palace without waiting until his car should be prepared; did not this model of sages commit here an indecorous action?"

"At that time," replies Mencius, "Confucius was prime minister of the kingdom; the king had the right of summoning his minister, and it was the duty of the minister to obey as speedily as possible. It is not the same with a sage, who, not being invested with any dignity, is consequently not subject to the same law."

This remarkable passage is especially curious as openly showing that from time immemorial the philosophers of the East claimed the privilege of raising themselves above kings. India, with its brahmins, presents the same spectacle, as does also Judea with its prophets.

There remains for us now only to speak of the *Hiao-King*, or treatise on filial piety, a work attributed to Tseng-tsee, one of the most famous of the disciples of Confucius. The sage is here introduced discoursing with his pupil, in the same manner as Socrates and Cato in the treatises of the two greatest philosophers of Greece and Rome.

Confucius being seated with Tseng-tsee, says to him: "Do you know what the supreme virtue and the essential doctrine was which our ancient monarchs taught to all the empire, in order to maintain concord among their subjects, and to banish all jealousy and discontent from the breasts of superiors and inferiors?" "How can I know," replies Tseng-tsee, respectfully, rising from his seat, "I who am so little learned?" "Filial piety," replies Confucius, "is the root of all virtues, and the prime source of instruction. Sit down, and I will develope for your instruction this important truth."

"After this exordium, the philosopher resumes as follows:—

"Our entire body, even to the finest epidermis and the hair, comes to us from our father and mother; to make the preservation of this body a matter of conscience is the beginning of filial piety. To attain to the perfection of this virtue,

a son ought to endeavour to excel in the practice of his duties to illustrate his name and immortalize himself, in order that the glory thereof be reflected on his parents. Filial piety is divided into three immense spheres; the first is that of the care and respect which we must render to our parents; the second embraces all that regards the service of our prince and our country; the last and the most elevated is that of the acquisition of virtue, and of what constitutes our perfection."

We perceive by these extracts that filial piety is the source from whence the Chinese make every virtue flow. All public order is for them attached to this sacred chain, but by a fiction as touching as it is sublime, generations, faithfully repeated, are suspended thereto as if they were contemporary, and the fickle power of time is vanquished by filial love.

"Filial piety," says Confucius, in another part of the *Hiao-King*, "embraces all, from the emperor on his throne to the meanest of his subjects; it neither commences nor ends with any one. Whatever difficulty we may experience in fulfilling all its duties, it would yet be madness to say that these duties cannot be fulfilled."

"Oh, immensity of filial piety!" cries Tseng-tsee; "how admirable art thou! What the regular motion of the stars is for the firmament, the fertility of the fields for the earth, filial piety is for the people. Heaven and earth never belie themselves; let the people imitate them, and the learning of the world will be as enduring as the light of heaven and the productiveness of the soil."

The best commentary on the *Hiao-King* which the Chinese possess, is the example of their virtuous emperors, and of their philosophers and great men of olden times. No glory is admissible with them

if filial piety lends not to it its lustre. "In their eyes," says Cibot, in his *Mémoire sur l'Antiquité des Chinois*, "the saviour of the country even, were he a bad son, would be regarded as a monster worthy only of death;" or rather, they rightly conceive it as an impossibility that he who loves and reveres not his parents can dare to boast of loving his country.

Here we bring our task to a close. We have endeavoured in the foregoing pages to enable our readers to form some idea of the great canonical writings of the Chinese. From the perusal of these writings, or such portions of them as have been rendered familiar to us through the investigations and labours of European Orientalists, we can rise but with one feeling; namely, respect, if not admiration, for the genius of a nation which, twelve centuries anterior to the Christian era, showed evidences of such a high and advanced state of civilization. Though some few of the directions and precepts contained in the works we have just now briefly noticed are calculated from their quaint minuteness to excite a smile, yet when we consider the high moral tone of many of the maxims contained in these works, the elevated beauty of their conceptions, and their expressive and truly Oriental poetry, always beautiful, and frequently rising to the sublime, it is almost with a feeling of humiliation that we may turn our thoughts *inwards*, and consider that though highly favoured as we have been with the light of Gospel truth, yet small, comparatively speaking, has been our progress in the moral virtues of filial piety and obedience to the laws of our God and our King—to say nothing of learning and philosophy—when compared with that nation we have been too long accustomed to look down upon with feelings of contemptuous superiority.

A FEMALE "BRAVE."

FIFTY or sixty years ago, Ireland might be called the classic land of the duello, where men fought their way to eminence even in peaceable professions, and could only hope to retain it by the same unhesitating spirit. It is not so generally known, however, that this same recklessness was occasionally engendered in the bosoms of the fairer sex, partly, as it may be supposed, from the fact of hearing their male relatives speak of duelling as a matter of course, which no man either wished or hoped to avoid, and partly from the rollicking sort of life and imperfect education which at that period even females of the upper classes led and received. Faulty and to be deprecated, however, as this feeling might be, in one instance it had a fortunate termination, and procured for the Irish peerage one of its afterwards most brilliant and respected matrons.

The matter happened thus:—

Near one of the principal western towns and seaports resided the respectable family of the B—s; and at the time we speak of, their house was blessed with one fair daughter, and no more. Miss Christine B— was a belle, a beauty, and the spoiled darling of a quiet, easy-tempered father and mother, who allowed her in everything to have her own way. She was a very lovely, high-spirited girl, rendered inordinately vain by admiration and parental indulgence; and so proud of her own peerless attractions, as to fancy that no station or rank was too high for her to hope to reach. With such manifold means of conquest, of course she was surrounded by admirers wherever she went; and although now and then she condescended to give a certain amount of encouragement to some of them, still, when they pressed for a final answer, it always was given in a way fatal to their hopes. Hence it was that after a season or two she had earned for herself the name of a heartless coquette, whose sole aim was to amuse herself at the expense of others. Her popularity did not diminish, however, as her respectability was undoubted and her social talents great; and, on the whole, she was regarded as one who possessed many good and amiable traits to counterbalance her more obvious and distasteful ones.

About this time there arrived on a sporting visit to one of her friends a young gentleman who was both an "honourable"

and a "M.P." He was the only son of a nobleman of great wealth and ancient title, and was perfectly alive to the value which these claims gave him to the consideration of others and to his own self-esteem. He was very young, not more than three-and-twenty, and looked to be even younger than he was; for he was slim, not tall, and with delicate features and particularly light hair. He was handsome enough to be admired by those who were influenced by his rank and expectations, and in his own esteem he was understood to have no superior. Soon after his arrival in her neighbourhood he was introduced to the fair Christine, and from that moment became her shadow. At first she avoided him, and treated him coldly, speaking of him slightly, and ridiculing his pretensions to be considered as either a very agreeable or a very fortunate man; for in his looser moments he had spoken freely to his companions of his wonderful success as a lover, and of the many conquests he had made. Miss B— had heard from the sister of one of his male friends, that he had even gone so far as to set her down as one of the list of the vanquished, and had laid a wager that before he left the country he would bring the universal conqueror to his feet—not with the idea of marrying, but of laughing at her. Strange to say, however, the information thus given her as a warning had an effect on her contrary to that which it was expected it would; she kept her mind to herself, but from that time forward it was evident that she was gradually yielding to the fascinations of the Honourable George, and was unwittingly creeping within the treacherous folds with which he meant to envelop her. She rode out with him alone, talked to him in preference to others, dismissed partners in the ball-room to become his, sang when he asked her, and, in point of fact, appeared to be fast approaching to that stage of devotion to which it was his aim to bring her. When this had gone on for some weeks, he began to feel that he had sufficiently proved his power, and showed a wish to "draw off." His fair friend, however, either did not understand these recalcitrant symptoms, or did not wish to countenance them. Nevertheless, she took no umbrage at his new coldness, and still continued to seek his society and to claim his attentions as usual. At length,

as if wearied by her persevering affection—which no effort, almost no insult on his part apparently could diminish—he announced at a dinner-party at which they both were, that he was about to leave his western friends in a day or two. To this Miss B—— made no demur, and offered no opposition; neither did her spirits flag, nor was she seen to drop a single tear, or spoil her beautiful brow by a frown. It was even remarked that her spirits on that evening were higher than usual, in proof of which she made a point of somewhat departing from feminine timidity, and showing her power in unaccustomed ways. For instance, greatly to the Honourable George's annoyance (who thought himself the magnet of attention), she followed the gentlemen into the billiard-room, with two or three of her young lady friends, and insisted on playing a game with him. She beat him, too; and this only added to his disgust. Tired of this amusement, the gentlemen proposed to adjourn to the shooting gallery, in order to determine a disputed point. Hither also Miss B—— and her female friends persisted in following them, very much to the delight of every one but the Honourable George. Almost as they entered the gallery he ventured a reproof to her in an undertone by saying that he had hardly expected to find her sympathizing in so very unfeminine a pursuit. This did not repress her ardour, and she answered lightly that it was evident he did not know either her habits or her tastes, or he would not have been astonished at anything she did. After saying which, she proceeded towards a rack where several pairs of pistols hung, and choosing one of them, whilst she handed him another—or, at least, offered it for his acceptance—she challenged him to shoot with her at the target which stood at the bottom of the room. This she did amidst the loud applause of her male friends, who saw nothing disreputable or unfeminine in her challenge. Her lover, however, still held back.

"I fear, Mr. H——," she said to him, "that you are only a carpet-knight, and that any conquest you will ever make will be in other fields than those of Mars. Come, take your pistol, and do not be afraid of so weak a foe as I am. I will wager this pretty brooch of mine against your brilliant, so that, whether I win or lose, you will still dwell in my remembrance for ever."

Goaded into compliance, he bowed at

last, and said that even the whims of so fair an opponent must be humoured.

The first shot was conceded to her, and she just missed the bull's-eye, but touched its outward circle.

"I will do better the next time," she said, quietly, handing her pistol to be re-loaded, "as I see where my error lies. I ought to have done better, however; only, as papa says, my pistol-hand is a little rusty."

The Honourable George followed, but with a less steady aim. He was wide of the mark, and was laughed at for his failure by all but Miss B——.

"Nay, gentlefolks," she said, gaily, "do not blame him, for evidently his practice has been in drawing-rooms, not in shooting-galleries. Look, Mr. H——," she went on, addressing him; "you depressed your weapon a thought too low, and a point-blank aim, like a point-blank intention, is the surest way to escape disgrace. Watch me, and if you are wise take example by what I shall do."

This time she pierced the very heart of the mark, and that done, she flung aside the weapon.

"Now I shall go and have my tea," she said, entwining the waist of one of her young friends caressingly; "and having conquered Mr. H—— on two fields on one evening, I have reason to be amply satisfied."

It was observed that during the remainder of the evening the Honourable George was much more respectful to her than he had been for a week before.

A day or two passed over, during which the Honourable George and Miss B—— did not meet. It was understood, however, that he was about to leave the neighbourhood on the next morning, and on the evening previous he was returning from paying a farewell visit to a family on the outskirts of the town, when, at a turn of the lonely road, he was met by Miss B—— on horseback. He was about to pass her with a bow, when she turned her horse's head and rode beside him.

"Your are about to leave us to-morrow, I understand, Mr. H——," she said at last, after waiting a minute or two for his address.

"I regret to say that I am compelled to do so," he replied.

"You will go away richer than you came, I hope?"

"Richer in friends, certainly," with a bow.

"And—in bets, too, or I am greatly misinformed," she said, gravely.

"I do not understand you, Miss B—."

"I thought you would not, sir," she said, more seriously than before. "I do not wonder that you should study to forget what no honourable or upright man would like to remember. Answer me, if you please, and pray endeavour to go as straight to the mark as I did the other evening. You sought my acquaintance, and you persisted in your advances when they were distasteful to me; dare you say why?"

"I—I admired you—as a friend."

"You followed me, sir," she went on, "and insisted on showering those attentions on me which, from a man to a woman, may be taken in either of two ways—that is, either as the vilest of insults or the greatest of compliments. Which of these was your meaning, Mr. H—?"

"Not as insults, certainly."

"I am glad to hear it, sir, for your own sake," she persevered. "Why, then, did you make a bet of a hundred pounds that you would conquer and bring me to your feet? Pray do not deny the fact, or you will force me to tell the gentleman with whom you made it that you have branded him as a liar by saying what was not the fact."

The Honourable George was dumbfounded.

"I am glad to see, sir, that you have prudence enough left to be silent," she said. "And now listen to me, Mr. H—;

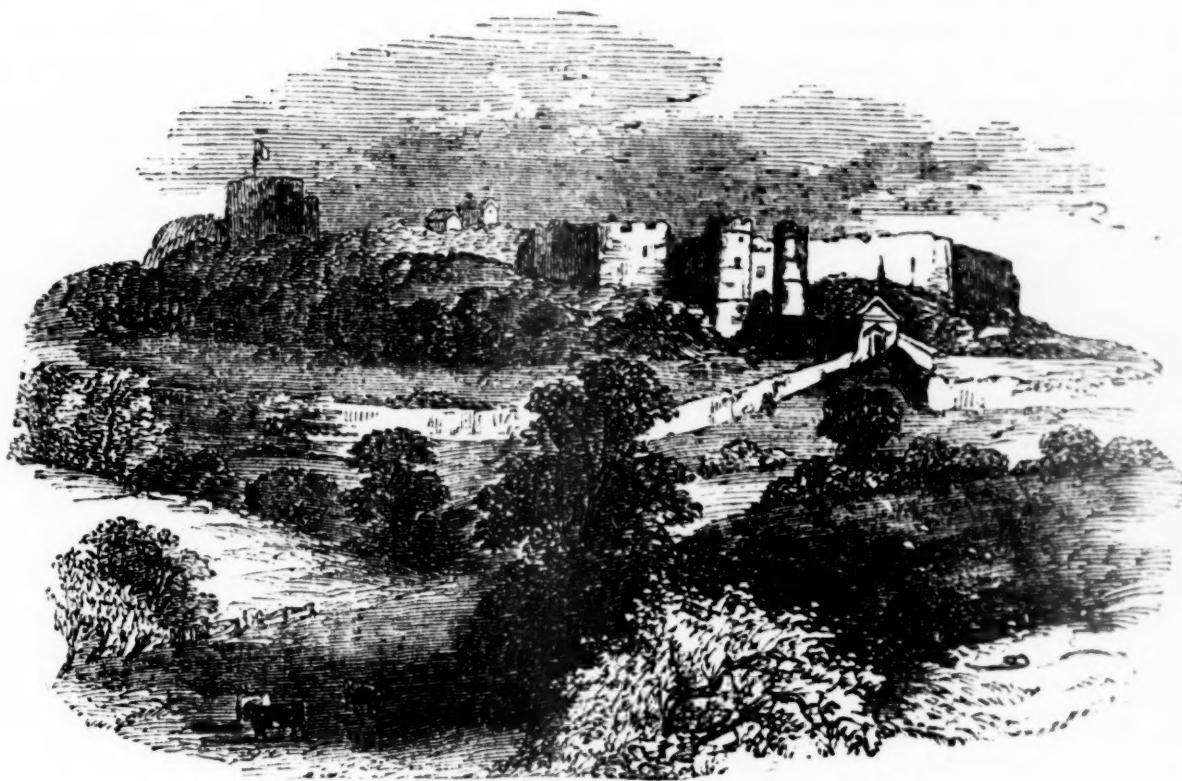
for your own discreditable amusement, you have ventured to trifle with my feelings, careless whether my reputation should suffer or my peace of mind be gone. I have no brother to protect me from such unmanly attempts, nor would I ask him even if I had, as I am quite able to protect myself. You owe me reparation for this inexcusable wrong, and I beg leave to tell you, calmly and dispassionately, that the debt must be paid, and that until it is so you shall not leave this neighbourhood unpunished. What form it shall take, sir, I leave to your own heart and judgment to determine, but I solemnly warn you that no mode of escape open to you shall be available until my friends are well assured that I have no further reason to complain. Should I not have a full and satisfactory explanation to-night, I shall deal with you in another manner before you commence your journey to-morrow, and should you prefer a dastardly retreat in the dark to a more honourable course of proceeding, be assured, sir, that I shall find means to reach you, go where you will."

She turned her horse, broke into a gallop, and left her lover in a maze.

The course she took might have been a doubtful one with many, but she had accurately gauged her man, and knew the treatment necessary for his constitution. He went home, pondered deeply, and long before midnight Miss B— was favoured with a repentant letter, in which was contained an offer of his hand.

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF THE PICTURESQUE.

No. 14.—CARISBROOKE CASTLE.



THE village of Carisbrooke is about a mile nearly south and by west of Newport, the metropolis of the Isle of Wight. The castle was fortified in the times of the Saxons, and probably was a stronghold of the Romans, if not of the ancient Britons. It occupies one of the conical rounded hills which are a distinguishing feature of the island.

The *Land we Live In*, one of the most interesting topographical works which the visitor can take with him as a companion, furnishes an account of the castle which will please our readers:—

William the Conqueror gave the Isle of Wight to his kinsman William Fitz-Osborne, and created him Lord of Wight. Fitz-Osborne, after overcoming the resistance of the islanders, took up his abode at Carisbrooke, which was already a fortified place. He is believed to have erected the oldest part of the present castle on the site of a much more ancient one. Be that as it may, the castle became the residence of the Lords of Wight, and the town of Carisbrooke was the capital of the island. The Lords of Wight retained their insular sovereignty till the reign of Edward I., who purchased the regalities, and appointed a Warden of the island, with the old title, subject to

removal at his pleasure. This arrangement was continued till 1445, when that feeblest of monarchs, Henry VI., created the Earl of Warwick 'King' of the Isle of Wight, and crowned the new sovereign with his own hands. But this title was of course never renewed, and the old one was dropped in the reign of Henry VII., who appointed a "Captain" of the island; the title was changed to that of Governor in the seventeenth century, and that title and office are still continued. While the Lords of Wight resided in the castle the French made many descents upon the island, which they more than once ravaged; and they frequently attacked the castle, but do not appear to have ever taken it. One of their last descents upon the island was in the reign of Richard II., when, after plundering it, they laid siege to the castle. Many of the besiegers were slain during the siege, especially on one fatal occasion, when a large party of them were drawn very close to the walls, and fell into an ambush which had been prepared for them. There is a tradition that one of the lanes leading to the castle owes its name of Deadman's-lane to having been the scene of the slaughter; and that Node Hill, on the way to Newport, was formerly called Noddies Hill, on account of its

having served as the burial-place of the *Noddies*, who suffered themselves to be thus entrapped. This is the country etymology: we are not responsible for it.

But the chief historical interest attaching to the castle arises from the confinement within it of the unfortunate Charles I. Charles, it will be remembered, on escaping from Hampton Court, repaired to the coast of Hampshire, and, after some hesitation, resolved to place himself under the protection of Colonel Hammond, the Governor of the Isle of Wight. He was lodged in Carisbrooke Castle. At first he was treated with courtesy, and even permitted to ride out with a small escort; but stricter measures were soon enforced, and the king became a close prisoner. Some wild projects were started for his release; but Carisbrooke Castle was too strong a place, and too well garrisoned, to allow of hope from any plan which the Royalists were then capable of executing. His son, Prince Charles, indeed, had at one time a good fleet in the Downs; but, though urged by the king, he did not avail himself of the opportunity to attempt to liberate his father. Charles himself made two efforts to escape. The first time he tried to force his body between the bars of his window; but they were too close together, and he had difficulty in drawing himself back again. Then his followers succeeded in conveying to him acids for corroding the bars, and a rope by which to lower himself; and a night was fixed for the attempt. When it came he was made aware that his window was watched from below, and it was believed that if he had appeared outside he would have been shot. Charles was a prisoner here rather more than a year, and from hence he was removed to that miserable "castle" we saw from Cliff-end awhile ago; and, soon after, where strife and sorrow are unknown.

Carisbrooke Castle is now a mere ruin, but it is a very fine one. It stands on a lofty eminence, and the keep is raised still higher by being placed on an artificial mound. It thus presents a commanding aspect from every side. The castle is of very different dates; some parts of it are probably as old as William Fitz-Osborne; but the castle was rebuilt in the reign of Henry I., and probably most of the older parts of the present remains are of that time. The grand gateway, represented in our engraving, was erected in the reign of Edward IV. by Lord Woodville, whose arms are sculptured upon the front. Woodville sold the castle to the king, and

it has ever since remained an appanage to the crown. It was repaired by Elizabeth, who built the outer walls and the gateway outside the bridge, and also some domestic offices yet remaining, and now used as the residence of the keeper. The defensive part of the castle was permitted to go to ruin after the Restoration, though it was used for some time longer as a state-prison.

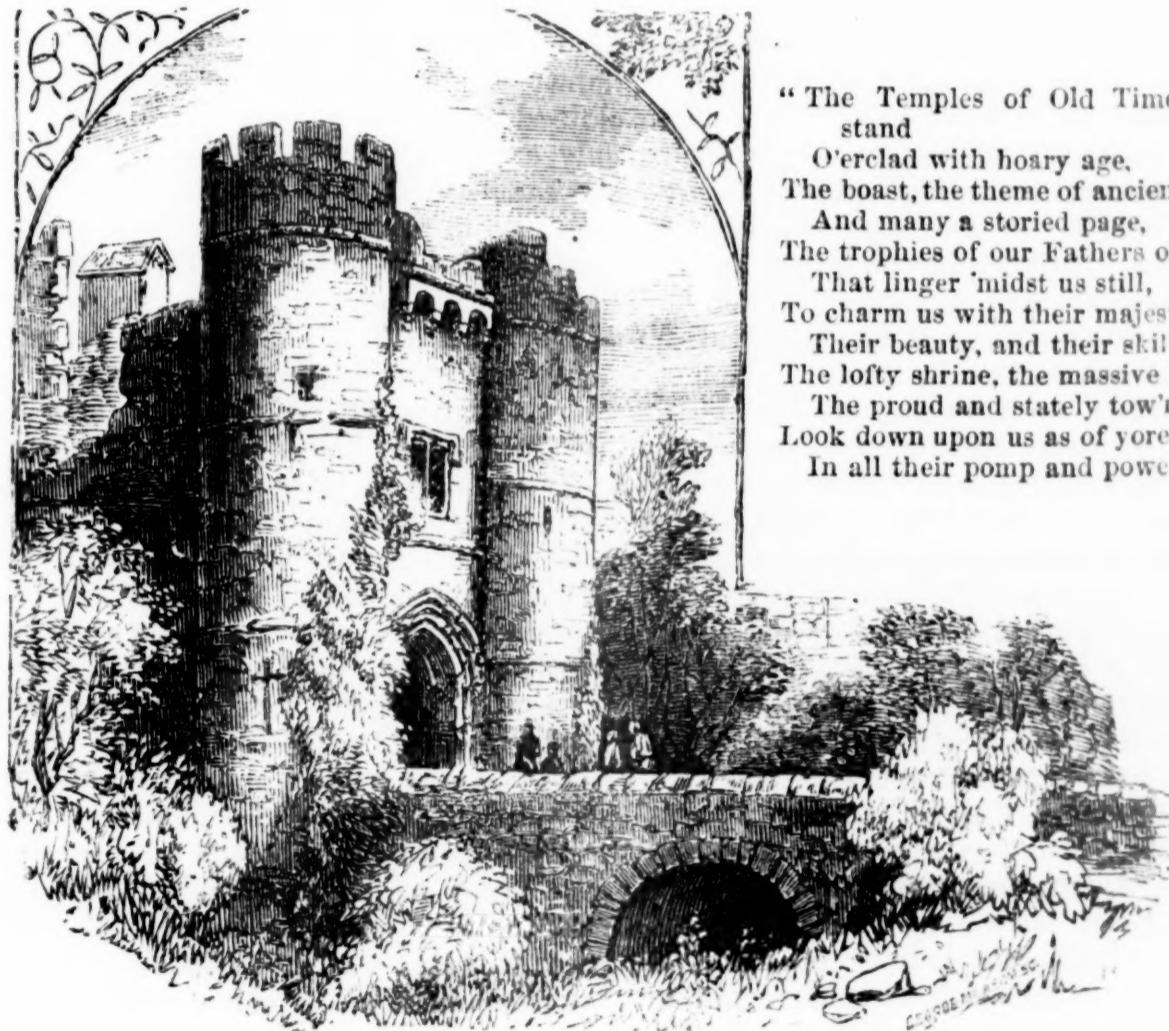
The walls of the castle enclose an area of about twenty acres; and the whole is surrounded by a broad moat, long since drained. The entrance from the road is by Queen Elizabeth's Gate, a not unpicturesque little building in its present mouldering state, with the dark-green ivy climbing over it; but the grand entrance is Woodville's Gateway, on the other side of the bridge. This is the finest feature left of the old castle. The gateway is strengthened by a portcullis and bold machicolations, and flanked by round towers of noble proportions: it is altogether a very handsome specimen of its class of architecture. On passing through it, the person who shows the castle calls your attention to some ruinous walls on your left hand, as the prison wherein Charles was confined: the window, still preserved, is said to be that from which he attempted to escape. You are then directed to the "Saxon" keep, and left to ascend, if you please, "the wearisome but necessary height." There are said to be some seventy-odd steps to this steep "flight," which leads to the keep, and there are some more from thence to the parapet. But no one will complain who ascends them. The prospect would be worth climbing for, were there no steps to assist the ascent: it embraces as wide a range of country as the summit of Mountjoy, and is perhaps more varied. The view of the lower valley of the Medina is not comparable to that from Mountjoy; but those on the south, over the rich undulations of cultivated and wooded country, are much finer. The ramparts also afford very pleasing views.

One of the most curious things in the castle is the well, which is above three hundred feet deep. The visitor is shown into the well-house, and while he is noticing the singular appearance of the room, one side of which is occupied by an enormous wooden wheel—a small lamp is lighted; and after being told to mark the time that elapses before a glass of water that is thrown down strikes against the bottom of the well, the lamp is lowered

by means of a small windlass, making, as he watches its descent, a circle of light continually lessening, till the lamp is seen to float on the surface of the water at a depth that makes him almost dizzy. A grave old ass is then introduced, who quietly walks into the huge treadwheel, which he anon begins to turn—as curs in days of yore turned spits—whereby the bucket is lowered and drawn up again; which feat being accomplished, Jacob very soberly walks out again. This well has, from time out of mind, served the castle with water, and still serves it—and, as the visitor will find if he tastes it, serves it well. The same method of drawing the water has always been in practice; and the drawers have lived long in the exercise of their vocation. Fame tells of one who drew water here for fifty odd years, and might, perchance, have drawn as many more; but, becoming weary of so long treading the same dull round, he threw himself from the ram-

parts. The books and the gentle guide, do indeed say that the ancient drawer fell over the ramparts by accident—but who will credit that of a donkey? His successor was not of quite such Macrobian habit, but he lived to enjoy for some thirty years a pension of a penny loaf a day conferred on him by one of the governors.

Before leaving the castle, you are shown the chapel; but it is much more modern than any other part of the building, having been erected by George II. on the site of a very old one that had become unserviceable, and it has nothing remarkable in its appearance. In it the Mayor of Newport used to be sworn upon entering his office and on the annual renewal of his term; and this presents a pleasing picture, as the sacredness of the place would seem to point it out as most suitable for the inauguration of a chief magistrate among men.



"The Temples of Old Time, they stand
 O'erclad with hoary age,
 The boast, the theme of ancient song,
 And many a storied page,
 The trophies of our Fathers old,
 That linger 'midst us still,
 To charm us with their majesty,
 Their beauty, and their skill.
 The lofty shrine, the massive keep,
 The proud and stately tow'r,
 Look down upon us as of yore
 In all their pomp and power."

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF POPULAR FALLACIES.

No. 9.—“IT IS ONLY A WHITE LIE.”

“TRUTH,” it is said, “lies at the bottom of a well.” And it is to be feared that the well is so exceedingly deep that scarcely any one has yet reached to the bottom. For we find scarcely any one that does not, more or less, indulge their fancy in matters that have but little relation to truth. We have heard it said, indeed, that the world would be a very dull and stupid world, if everybody confined themselves to strict truth; that all the fine play of the fancy, all the working of the imagination would disappear; that our poets would have had no existence, our dramatists would have been unknown—even Shakspeare himself would have been a dead letter, a

“ Small model of the barren earth,
That serves as paste and cover for our bones;”

and would have left no sign by which he might be recognised in the present age. This, however, is not correct reasoning; for it is exactly in proportion to their regard for the everlasting truths of nature and humanity, that they are recognised as true poets; the garb in which they choose to dress their productions may be fiction, but it must contain great and high truths, or it will not survive an instant. Homer and Milton were blind, but not blind guides to truth; their inward spirit was sharp-sighted to discover truth, and place it before the world in undying light. Shakspeare has more of truth in his pages than in many a history which the world deems veracious. And so with all other writers; it is their appreciation of truth, and adherence to its standard, that makes their works valuable; and when they depart from this standard, they sink into mere scribblers, without fame or reputation. We cannot, therefore, find an excuse for a departure from truth by reference to the poets; by the supposition that if we did not indulge ourselves in flights of imagination without regard to truth, everything in this life would be flat, stale, and unprofitable. Again, in the wildest fictions of the poets, where the form has the most extravagant departure from apparent truth, the intention is often to convey a great truth under this disguise; we need not refer to the Divine parables, for these must occur readily to

every mind, or to the talking birds and animals of *Aesop* and other fabulists; in all these cases the main object is to enforce some wholesome truth, and the great characteristic of falsehood—the intention to deceive—is wanting.

In the common intercourse of the world, however, we find ourselves beset on every side by falsities—by false appearances, false statements, false professions, false friends—every grade and hue of deceit and dishonesty. And we believe it is more from carelessness of truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world. This carelessness of truth is too often fostered and encouraged by the excuses which we find for ourselves and make for others in any deviation from the truth, by calling it “a white lie.” We seem to imagine that when a lie has not the blackness of malignity attached to it, that it becomes clothed in a garment of purity, and is not only excusable, but harmless. But no one can habitually violate truth in small matters—in “white lies,” without so acquiring the habit that it will extend to great things also. Dr. Johnson correctly says, “All truth is not of equal importance; but if little violations be allowed, every violation will, in time, be thought little.” So far, indeed, did Dr. Johnson carry his love of truth—so strongly did he dislike the common “white lies” which have become almost conventionalities in society, that he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. “A servant’s strict regard for truth,” said he, “must be weakened by the practice. A philosopher may know that it is only a form of denial, but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for me, have I not reason to apprehend that he may tell many lies for himself?” The great moralist was thus particular as to the commonest lie of convenience, which most people hardly class as a lie at all, but merely consider as a polite mode of giving people to understand that you are too much engaged to see company. One of our philosophers of the last century, went so far as to say that there was no harm in anything on earth but in a lie, and that if a man murdered his father, it

was nothing but a particular mode of telling a lie, and saying that he was not his father. We fear this century is but little amended from the last in the article of truth-telling; although it is to be hoped there are but few men have that particular mode of telling a lie which Dr. Wolaston speaks of. Some, indeed, deny their fathers without exactly murdering them. A young spark whom we once had some slight acquaintance with, who was ostensibly pursuing his legal studies in London as an attorney's clerk, and living in rather gay style, used frequently to talk largely of his steward in the country; one day a grave, respectable-looking old gentleman arrived at his lodgings, whom we were all told was the steward we had heard so much of; this might have passed off, but, unfortunately for the success of the "white lie," a visitor of one of his companions happened to come from the same town as this veracious youth, and recognised in the steward—his father, a very respectable, well-to-do-in-the-world tanner; whom this sprig of gentility in the shape of a lawyer's clerk was ashamed to own as his parent. This is one of the "white lies" of vanity, perhaps one of the most fertile sources of a departure from truth. The common excuse for these "white lies" is, that they do nobody any harm. Indeed! When the young lawyer's clerk found himself covered with ridicule, and generally despised by his associates, for the false shame which led him to deny his father, and the lie that he told to hide the relationship, we think he found that he had done himself some harm. And thus it is ever with these lies without malignity—these "white lies;" they may not do others harm, but they recoil upon the person telling them; and their most serious words obtain no belief. Confidence is shaken between man and man, the very bonds of society are ruptured. For, as Dr. Johnson says, "without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is, there is so little truth that we are afraid to trust to our ears; but how should we be, if falsehood were multiplied ten times? Society is held together by communication and information; and I remember this remark of Sir Thomas Browne:—'Do the devils lie? No, for then hell could not subsist!'"

These lies of vanity are very despicable, although so very common; and some of the practical lies of this kind are as ridiculous as they are despicable. The desire to cut a figure—to make a dash among

people who neither know nor care anything about you, leads some silly fools into the most ludicrous extravagance of practical lying. We remember a couple of young students, in London, who had their bread to get by their profession, so completely inoculated by the silly vanity of appearing to be great and wealthy men, that they denied themselves many necessaries, and all amusements, in order to hire a couple of horses to ride in the park on Sundays; and they were not content to ride there quietly as a couple of gentlemen, but they must, forsooth, have their servant in livery behind them. This, however, was beyond their means, until the ingenuity of their vanity hit upon this plan:—Being about the same size, they got a flaring green and gold suit of livery made that fitted them both; and on alternate weeks one of them enacted the servant, and the other the master; and thus, in grand state, they paraded up and down Rotten Row, on their spavined hacks, much to the delectation of their inordinate vanity. We doubt if any one present ever wasted a thought on them; but the snobbish spirit of flunkeyism was strong within them, and they willingly submitted to don the servile garb one week, that the next they might ride in the full consciousness of having a livery following them. At length some of their acquaintances discovered the affair, and from that time, for the rest of their lives, they were known by the soubriquet of the "greensfinches," in allusion to their flaring livery. In after years we remember seeing the very same green and gold on the back of an errand boy, in the employ of one of the "greensfinches."

Sometimes these lies of vanity are productive of very disastrous consequences to those near and dear to the tellers of them. We remember a little tale, by Mrs. Opie, which illustrates in a most painful manner the evils that may arise from these "white lies" of vanity. She describes a wealthy merchant of strict principles and high honesty, who, by a sudden revolution in trade, was entirely ruined. He had lived surrounded by all the luxuries which his wealth entitled him to enjoy; and, in spite of his high character, not without some of the calumnies which malevolence too frequently indulges in towards those she envies. In the season of his misfortunes he at once gave up to his creditors all that he possessed—his plate, furniture, carriages, horses

—everything was surrendered, and he retired to a small village in Wales to live cheaply on the very small settlement which had been made on his wife. The calumnies which his wealth and style of living caused, had set some of his creditors against him; but in the days of his poverty these calumnies gradually died away, and even the creditors who had been most opposed to him, were beginning to relent, and had agreed to sign his certificate, so that he might again enter into business, and accept the offer made him by an old friend to join him in a partnership. This merchant had an only daughter, who had been brought up by a doting grandmother, by whom the seeds of vanity had been fostered in the young girl's mind. Unfortunately for the poor merchant, it chanced that the daughter was returning home from a visit in the same stage-coach with some of the most suspicious of her father's creditors, who were coming down to form a judgment for themselves before they signed the certificate. Like all vain and silly people, the young lady began to give herself great airs, and show herself off as a person of great dignity;—talked of her own maid—her boudoir, her father's conservatories, her grandmother's carriages, all the things which in the days of her wealth she had enjoyed, as if she was still in the possession of them. The creditors discovered that she was the daughter of the bankrupt merchant, whose certificate they had been about to sign, in the belief that he had acted honestly; but finding his daughter such a very fine lady, boasting so loudly of the luxuries she enjoyed, and even on being taxed with being the daughter of the bankrupt, maintaining that although her father had been unfortunate, they were very well off now, with such a pretty residence, such a sweet garden, and such a charming hot-house, they thought they had sufficient evidence to prove the bankrupt was nothing other than a swindling scoundrel. All their former suspicions were renewed and confirmed, for it was easier to suppose the bankrupt was still the rascal they had always thought him, than that a young girl should have told so many falsehoods at the mere impulse of vanity. In a very short time the father was made to feel the effects of the "white lies" of the daughter. Instead of having his certificate signed, and a remittance forwarded him from the gentleman who had

been about to take him into partnership, to enable him to take his family to town, he was told that all connexion between them was for ever at an end; that the business was given away to a *worthy* man, but that he stood in the position of a fraudulent bankrupt whose certificate should never now be signed. This communication wound up thus:—"Should you wonder what has occasioned this change in my feelings and proceedings, I am at liberty to inform you, that your daughter travelled in a stage-coach, a few days ago, with your two principal creditors; and, I am desired to add, that children and fools speak truth." This proverb we fear is no more true at all times than many of those we have been illustrating. At all events it was not true in that instance; the "white lies" of the daughter had completely ruined the father—ruined his prospects, his character, and his good name. And it was not until after long suffering and sickness on the part of the father, and the deserved humiliation of the daughter, by the forced confession of her falsehoods, that the evils occasioned by these "white lies" were removed, and the father restored to his good name and his position in society. And the tale winds up with this moral, supposed to be addressed by the repentant daughter in after life to her own children, after telling them her own story as a warning against the evils of lying:—"Not that retributive justice in this world, like that which attended mine, may always follow your falsehoods, or those of others; but because all lying is contrary to the moral law of God; and that the liar, as Scripture tells us, is not only liable to punishment and disgrace here, but will be the object of certain and more awful punishment in the world to come."

Dr. Johnson, in one of the numbers of his *Rambler*, gives a very strong picture of the difficulties attendant on speaking the strict truth. "There are, indeed," he says, "in the present corruptions of mankind, many incitements to forsake truth; the need of palliating our own faults, and the convenience of imposing on the ignorance or credulity of others, so frequently occur; so many immediate evils are to be avoided, and so many present gratifications to be obtained by craft and delusion; that very few of those who are much entangled in life have spirit and constancy sufficient to support them in the steady practice of open veracity.

In order that all men may be taught to speak truth, it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it; for no species of falsehood is more frequent than flattery, to which the coward is betrayed by fear, the dependent by interest, and the friend by tenderness. Those who are neither servile nor timorous, are yet desirous to bestow pleasure; and while unjust demands of praise continue to be made, there will always be some whom hope, fear, or kindness will dispose to pay them."

And from this want of moral courage arise the lies of flattery, and the lies of fear, which are so current in society, and are carried to such a ridiculous excess. When a poor shivering boy, who has been sweeping a crossing, humbly asks for a halfpenny, how many are there among us who say—"I have no coppers," when he may almost hear them jingling in our pocket as we pass? The fear of being thought shabby by the poor boy, induces us to utter the "white lie;" and from small things this fear proceeds to greater, until, at length, we become not only thoroughly indifferent to the truth, but enamoured of the lie for the lie's sake, and are almost as proud of our skill as Captain Absolute's Fag in the *Rivals*. "Captain Absolute—" Well, sir, and what did you say?" Fag—"Oh, I lied, sir. I forgot the precise lie; but you may depend on't he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath, in order that we may lie a little consistently. Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir, very curious, indeed." Captain Absolute—"You have said nothing to them?" Fag—"Oh, not a word, sir—not a word! Mr. Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)"—Captain Absolute—"Sdeath! you rascal!"

—you have not trusted him?" Fag—"Oh no, sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity! He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly! My master (said I), honest Thomas (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors), is come to Bath to recruit—yes, sir, I said to recruit; and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, or to any one else." Captain Absolute—"Well; recruit will do—let it be so." Fag—"Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas that your honour had already enlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers." Captain Absolute—"You blockhead!—never say more than is necessary. Fag—"I beg your pardon, sir—I beg pardon—but, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge endorsements as well as the bill." Captain Absolute—"Well, take care you don't hurt your credit by offering too much security." We fear neither Captain Absolute, nor his servant Fag, had ever studied Aristotle, or they would have learned that all a man can gain by uttering falsehood is, not to be believed when he shall speak truth. But, common as is the habit of "white lying" to all of us—for, alas! there are but few indeed who are exempt from what Godwin calls the "plebeian lie"—yet, to be charged with having done it is one of the most heinous affronts that can be offered. Montaigne gives us a reason for our horror of such an odious charge, which should be deeply fixed in our hearts—"If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much as to say that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man."

ON SOME OF THE INCONVENIENCES OF CELEBRITY.

AMONG all the various parts it is man's lot to fill in this sublunary world of ours, I know not of a single state of existence more sad, more disagreeable, more slavish in a word, than that of the *celebrated man*.

Do you love repose and liberty? Is it your ambition to live at your own free will, to journey whithersoever your inclination may lead you, and in the manner most pleasing to you? Of remaining alone when you like; of speaking when it suits your convenience so to do, of keeping silent when you prefer it? Believe me, dear reader, remain little, humble, unperceived. Above all things, if it is your misfortune to be a statesman, a politician, or a man of letters, take especial care lest you contract a habit of uttering brilliant speeches in the "House," or of writing pieces capable of drawing crowds—I was going to say to the doors of "Old Drury," but, alas! the glory of Drury has, like many other things, passed away—or, in short, of perpetrating any one of those actions which are, now-a-days, regarded as prodigious, impracticable, or chimerical. Bear in mind that from the day on which you become a "lion," from the day that you are run after, sung to, danced to; from that ill-fated day you no longer belong to yourself; your person, your gestures, your words, your name, have become public property; every one considers that he has the right of making whatever use of them may best serve his purpose. And the most capricious, the most fantastic, the most imperious, and the most tyrannical of masters is, without contradiction, that many-headed monster we are pleased to denominate the "World."

When you go to a party—and if you have not been previously in the habit of going into the world, you are obliged to appear there now—hope no longer to enter noiselessly, to glide furtively into the crowd, to gain some snug corner where you may be permitted in peace to sit modestly ensconced between two or three friends, whose conversation interests and amuses you; or rather, alone, at a few paces distant from the object you adore, whose grace and beauty you silently contemplate.—No such thing; your entrance into the room is an event which moves, removes, and upsets all; they run in crowds to meet you; they surround you, they press upon you, they dispute with you even for that meagre

portion of fresh air which you imagine, in your innocence, you have the right of breathing; all speak to you, all question you, and you are expected to have at instant command a myriad of phrases remarkable, witty, or profound; in short, just such phrases as they can circulate next day all over town, as the latest sayings of the celebrated Mr. So-and-so; only too happy if after two or three hours' duration of this frightful labour your tormentors are kind enough to permit you to return home completely knocked up both in mind and body.

Above all things, most especially dread and shun the gentlemen connected with the public press, for, rest assured, that with whatever veil you may seek to shroud your person, you cannot hope to remain long hidden from their penetrating glance; they have eyes which pierce through all tissues, pens which respect no mystery. If it be your lot to have met with the most trifling accident, or to have caught the slightest cold, a thousand *bulletins* are issued and dispersed from one end of town to another; in society, in the drawing-rooms of the fashionable world, in the clubs—nothing is spoken of among great and small but the state of your pulse, of what physician is attending you, if your last night has been a tranquil one, and if the medicine administered has had the desired effect.

When you travel, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, St. Petersburg, New York, know, long before your own relations and friends, that you have taken your departure for the East, or that you are drinking the waters at Spa or Wiesbaden; and people given to conjecturing, puzzle their wise heads to divine, and having divined, hasten to point out to their less clear-sighted brethren, the political or literary or scientific end of this expedition of yours; for people take it for granted that all your movements must be for some important end, never for a moment imagining that a celebrated man can possibly travel for his mere individual amusement.

Much more, your itinerary is public, and at every post-house you must run the gauntlet of a crowd of idlers and sight-seers, esteeming yourself fortunate even if you escape the infliction of an harangue from the mayor or other principal personage of the spot. The land-

lord of the hotel at which you alight arranges his entire household in review order to receive you with becoming respect; you are not free to choose your own rooms, to order your own dinner; a man like you must occupy the best apartments in the house, devour the choicest morsels, drink the finest wines, pay the highest prices for everything, and give double gratuities to all the servants.

In conclusion, I declare to you, dear reader, in all the sincerity of my heart, that were I to be transformed into a crossing-sweeper, a cab-driver, or a doctor's boy, I would willingly resign myself to my lot; but heaven preserve me from ever being a "celebrated man," or if it is my destiny to become one, let it not be until after my death.

G. J. K.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

FROM THE SPANISH.

"My ear-rings, my ear-rings,
They've dropped into the well:
And what to say when my love comes back,
I'm sure I cannot tell."
'Twas thus, Granada's fountain nigh,
Spoke Albahanan's daughter:
"The well is deep, far down they lie,
Beneath the cold blue water.

"He gave them to me when he spoke
His lingering last farewell,
And what to say when he comes back
I'm sure I cannot tell.
My ear-rings, my ear-rings,
They were pearls in silver set,
That when my love was far away
My heart should not forget.

"Nor e'er to others' tongues should list,
Nor smile on others' tale;
But remember he my lips had kissed,
Pure as those ear-rings pale.
But oh! when he comes back and hears
I've dropp'd them in the well,
What he will say and think of me
I'm sure I cannot tell.

"But I do know, I'll tell the truth,
And hope he will believe:
That I thought of him at morning-tide,
And thought of him at eve.
That musing on him still so true,
When down the sun was gone,
My ear-rings in my hand I held,
By the fountain all alone.
That my mind was o'er the seas with him,
When from my hand they fell;
And that he lies deeper in my heart
Than they lie in the well."

"He'll think, when I to market went
I loiter'd by the way,
And that a willing ear I lent
To all the lads might say.
He'll think some other lover's hand,
Among my tresses noosed,
From the ears where he had fasten'd them
My pretty pearls had loosed.

"He'll think while I was sporting thus
Beside the Marble Well,
My pearls fell in, and what to say
I'm sure I cannot tell.
He'll say I am a woman,
And that we're all the same;
He'll say I lov'd when he was here,
And listen'd to his flame.

"But now he's gone abroad, he'll say,
My virgin troth I've broken,
And thought no more of his true love,
And cared not for his token.
My ear-rings, my ear-rings,
Oh! luckless, odious well,
For what to say when he comes back,
I'm sure I cannot tell.

AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT.

CHAPTER I.

FLATTERING ALLUSIONS.

IT would have been obvious to the most ordinary observer, had such a person been seated in the breakfast parlour of Honiton Lodge, Canonbury, that Mrs. Goodall, when she entered that apartment on a fine morning in August, was in a frame of mind of a rather seriously reflective character; and that, as she turned her eyes towards the window, and beheld in the garden, alert among the shrubs, one of the most pleasant-looking elderly gentlemen that ever carried health and happiness in his countenance, the object was before her who had been the cause of her anxious meditations.

"A nosegay for you, my dear," said Mr. Goodall, as he came into the room, "selected and arranged with a taste which one person only in the world could have infused into me;" and he handed the offering to his wife with a low bow, and then began to wonder how the hot rolls had suffered themselves to be distanced by the new-laid eggs.

Mrs. Goodall put aside the nosegay, and pouring out a cup of tea, observed, as she presented it to her husband—

"I do really wish, Herbert, that you had not taken that ticket for the anniversary dinner of the Samaritan Society. Not that the expense is great—certainly not; but our dear Herbert, now that he is gone to Cambridge, will be such a serious source of expense to us, that we positively ought to look twice at every shilling before we let it out of our hands."

"But I think you told me, my dear, that you had tied him to the apron-string of prudence when he left us," said Mr. Goodall. "No boating on the Cam; no betting at Newmarket; no champagne suppers; 'no tradesmen's bills,' as the man says in the advertisements."

"Yes, but," urged Mrs. Goodall, "the ordinary scale of expenditure at the University is quite astounding, he informs me in his letters; and we ought to pinch ourselves that he may be launched into the world creditably."

"Herbert would not mind, and will never miss, the guinea I have thrown away upon this dinner," remarked Mr. Goodall, with a cheerful smile. (He knew

very well that his boy would cheerfully go without his own dinner to purchase him a bundle of early asparagus.)

"I hope it may be so," returned the lady; "but you know I hate these public dinners."

"Quite without cause, I would have you to recollect at the same time," said Mr. Goodall. "Besides," he added, with dexterous quickness, perceiving that his wife was about to enter upon a reminiscence of flushed faces and bottles of soda water of former years, when they resided in Milk-street; "besides, consider these dinners are to be regarded not as feasts, whose only results are headache and indigestion, but as sacrifices of their own personal comfort, which a certain number of people consent to make for the worthy purpose of doing good to others. The Samaritans eat that others may do so after us; and if we don't teach them the way, we provide them with the means of doing so. Now, for instance, that fine brother of yours, Peregrine, who went abroad more than thirty years ago, and of whom you never afterwards heard—if there had been any such society as this at any port he might have reached, would probably have been saved to his friends and family, and might long ere this have returned to England a prosperous man."

Mrs. Goodall did not answer this appeal of her husband, but she sighed deeply—an utterance of the heart which her companion very widely mistook. He could not help thinking that the guinea ticket still rankled in the breast of his wife, and accordingly began once more to felicitate himself upon his prudence in withholding from her the fact that he had some days previously forwarded a cheque for five guineas, as his subscription to the Samaritan Society; a fact, indeed, which had he communicated it to his wife, would most seriously have discomposed that good lady. But her thoughts had taken another direction. The mention of her brother's name had, with vivid distinctness, recalled to her memory the handsome, high-spirited lad, whom a little more considerate kindness, or even a more easily intelligible and consistent discipline on the part of his parents, might have kept in check, and prevented from an untimely, and perhaps a cruel death; and she inwardly resolved that her son Herbert should never have any just cause to

reproach either Goodall or herself with any want of affectionate and judicious indulgence. From the son to the father—from one Herbert to another—was an easy mental transition, and the really kind and amiable Mrs. Goodall began to tax herself rather severely with her querulous selfishness (even though it was partly in behalf of “his boy,”) in seeking to debar her husband from enjoying so rare a festive luxury as an anniversary dinner at the London Tavern. All his disinterestedness, all his generosity, all his genuine worth, now magnified themselves before her mind’s eye in inordinate proportions, so that he appeared a highly idealized sort of cartoon figure of the congregated virtues of humanity. Had not Goodall sought her hand when he first entered life on his own account, and been roughly repulsed by her father with a plain intimation that his pretensions were as imprudent as they were extravagant? Had he not renewed his addresses when his prospects ought not to have been contemned, but with no better success; and, when disgrace fell upon her father and ruin upon the family, did he not endeavour to trace out her mother and herself in their humble lodgings in the suburbs, and did he not at length find the once proud and petulant girl, but by that time the humbled and spiritless ten years’ governess, and make her his wife? Why, to be sure he did. And was she to deny him so cheap a relaxation as a city charity dinner might afford? Not to be thought of! And Mrs. Goodall arose to attend to her household duties. I am not sure whether, while these reminiscences were in full play, if Goodall had imparted to her the circumstance of the five guinea cheque, she would not have good-humouredly owned that “it was just like him,” however she might afterwards have warned him against such imprudent liberality for the time to come. As it was, when the hour drew nigh to be thinking of his departure by the omnibus, Mrs. Goodall, in laying out his apparel, did not forget his most attractive and imposing waistcoat, neither did she omit placing upon it that curiously elegant silver snuff-box which he prized so highly, because she had presented it to him shortly after their marriage.

Meanwhile Mr. Goodall did not ransack his memory in search of materials for vexatious and self-accusing reflections. He seldom troubled the past except for handy reminiscences that were sure to

come at his bidding, and cheerfully show a light to the future. In accordance, therefore, with the dictates of this principle, or rather practice, he turned over in his mind, in well-pleased succession, the many public dinners at which he had assisted, taking note of the distinguishing points that gave an agreeable character to each. But there were important, exalting, and impressive circumstances connected with these festivities which were common to all. It is a privilege (so thought Mr. Goodall) acquired at a low price, when a guinea will obtain it for you, to sit at a magnificent table glittering with a profusion of glass and plate, with hundreds of well-dressed gentlemen, all in good humour and high spirits, and all apparently, and many really, as benevolent as ourselves. Then the band above, who incite you with martial airs to the dismemberment of a boiled fowl, and the vocalists afterwards, whose warblings seem to thrill through and cause to tremble the very bees’ wing in your wineglass! And then the exhilarating and irresistible entreaty? — no, exhortation? — hardly, command? — yes, that’s the word, from the predominant toastmaster, bidding gentlemen to “charge their glasses!” “That predecessor of Mr. Harker—what was the gentleman’s name?” mused Goodall, “whenever he commanded us to charge our glasses, always gave me a vivid conception of the heroic tone in which the great Duke vociferated ‘Up Guards, and at ‘em;’ and the manner in which we used to obey (here he chuckled), showed no doubt as much promptness as did those brave battalions.”

Anticipating a treat, to be recalled to memory hereafter, and made to act as a stimulus to future enjoyment, Mr. Goodall, after dressing himself with more than common care, suffered himself to be scrutinized from top to toe by his wife, received her admonitions, more than once repeated, to take every care of himself, with a benevolent but superior smile, indicating that it would be rather odd if he didn’t know pretty well how to do *that*, and stepped into the omnibus, which conveyed him to the Bank. Everybody knows what a short walk it is from that favourite resort of the public creditor, when the books are open for the dividend, to the London Tavern; and thither, for he feared he might be rather late, Mr. Goodall made the best of his way. A courteous waiter, when he entered the hall of that estab-

blishment, alertly put himself into a position to learn the pleasure of the new comer.

"The Samaritan Society's Dinner," said Mr. Goodall, presenting his ticket, with a smile of recognition.

"Postponed," said the waiter, with a bland curtness, jerking his head on one side, and his right eye verging in that direction, asking by that motion as plainly as speech could have done, "how on earth came you not to know that, sir?"

"Postponed!" exclaimed Mr. Goodall, "What! put off?"

"Till the twenty-fourth, sir. Did you not see the advertisement in the *Times*?"

"I am sorry to say I did not. God bless me! very awkward."

"Here!" cried the waiter, and vanished, but presently returned, bringing with him a printed list of the chairmen and stewards and other particulars, with the substitution of the later date, which he handed to Mr. Goodall.

But zephyr-like as was the swiftness of the etherealized waiter, as he did this last spiriting of his, our friend had had time to realize the unpleasant circumstances attending the attitude in which he stood, considered as a physical structure furnished with digestive organs which had remained long enough unemployed. He knew not where to dine. Should he betake himself to one of the taverns which abound in the courts and alleys of Cornhill? Out of the question. He had never been a solitary consumer of chops and steaks at the "Woolpack," "Joe's," or the "Fleece." Should he incontinently return home? It must even be so, although hopeless was the chance of any dinner to-day in that quarter; for he well knew that, whenever he dined out, Mrs. Goodall took the opportunity of having something of which she was particularly fond, and which he could not bear.

As he stood at the door of the tavern, debating this matter in his mind, with his lack-lustre eye fixed upon the printed paper which had just been given to him by the waiter, who should suddenly accost him but his old friend, Worthington, of Wood-street, with whom he had been acquainted pretty nearly as long as he remembered the tree which stands at the Cheapside corner of that populous thoroughfare.

"Ha! Goodall, glad to see you," said his friend. "But what has lured you from your sylvan retreat to this busy part of the City, where there is nothing to remind

you of the country but the 'Flower Pot,' hard by? But you look as though the spectre of the late Joseph Ady had just appeared to you, and presented you with a letter, informing you that he knows of something that concerned your welfare, which he should be happy to communicate on the payment of a sovereign."

"With satisfactory references to the Lord Mayor for the time being, and the persecuted Sir Peter," returned Goodall, with a faint smile. "No, my old friend, I'll tell you what it is, and all about it;" and hereupon he made an unreserved confession to Worthington of his present perplexity.

"Well, 'as luck would have it,' you were not to dine to-day at the London Tavern," remarked Worthington, with a genial briskness that the other could not but consider rather ill-timed. "I say 'as luck would have it,'" he continued, "because you shall dine with me. No denial—I won't stand it. I'm going to Blackwall to join a parcel of fellows at a whitebait dinner. Why, you know several of them; they'll all be delighted to see you. Now, no struggling and fighting in the street. The City police is a very active and efficient force by this time. Come, no nonsense." And Worthington thrust his arm under that of his almost reluctantly resisting friend, and walking him up Gracechurch-street, took a short cut through the market, listened to a few pathetic remonstrances on the part of Goodall in Fenchurch-street, which he made contemptuously light of, and had his victim on the platform of the Blackwall railway in no time.

"Now, I have you, my old boy," said Worthington, as he thrust him gently into one of the carriages.

"Yes, you have me," mused Goodall, as he placidly took a seat, and nodded assentingly. "But what will Harriet think of this, I wonder?—Stuff! ridiculous! For who could resist under the circumstances? I must tell her so—I must make that quite plain to her. Harriet is a woman of sense; indeed, I don't think it would be easy to find a woman who can more readily be induced to listen to reason than Mrs. Goodall! An excellent creature—bless her!" And after this mental soliloquy, Mr. Goodall faced his friend with something very like composure.

Now, I would not for the world it should be supposed by the reader that our hero—so to call him—by making the above flattering allusions to his wife's

understanding and amiability, even though by so doing he sought (as many greater men have done) to forestall her lenient construction of his present act when he came up for judgment—I say, I would not, because he did this, have it imagined that he was what is commonly called “hen-pecked.” The truth is, Mr. Goodall had accustomed himself to defer to his wife in all things; and as his name had long ago taught him that she never complained *altogether* without cause; and as, moreover, her displeasure was always mild, and never prolonged over five minutes; and further still, as he knew full well that it was caused by her affection for him and concern about him, he was well content to be the butt of shafts whose feathers were plucked from the haleyon’s wing, and whose points were tipped with a balsam that healed every wound as soon as it was made. Therefore it was that Mr. Goodall began to think it extremely likely that he should spend a very pleasant evening.

And how could it well be otherwise, he felt, as soon as he was ushered by Worthington into the room where all the guests were assembled? Sure enough, there were several there whom he knew very well, and who were as delighted to meet him as he was to see them; and the strangers of the party all looked like people with whom she should be happy to be better acquainted. The dinner, too, was of the first quality, and served in the best style. What champagne could be finer than this, which he was tempted to make rather too free with? Every joyous laugh testified to its exhilarating qualities; nor was his laughter unheard amidst the rest. He “must certainly bring Harriet to dine at Blackwall.” He “had threatened it a hundred times.” “She must come; and Herbert, too, the young dog! Wouldn’t he twist off the wires! ha! ha! He mustn’t go the whole hog, though; and to the hog he goes, as the poet says.”

CHAPTER II.

VERY STRANGE.

DURING the evening, Mr. Goodall, feeling a little heated, took a seat at one of the windows to enjoy the fresh breeze from the river. In the chair opposite sat a gentleman who had been introduced to him, and whose singular melancholy at such a board, and in such company, had awakened his sympathy. His present

taciturnity encouraged in Goodall a well-meant desire to draw him out.

“This is a glorious prospect, Mr. L’Estrange,” said he; “and one of which we Britons may well be proud.”

“Of what are we Britons *not* proud?” remarked the melancholy man, with a smile that interested Goodall. “I should not be surprised to hear that even the Isle of Dogs has its champions.”

“Ha! ha! very good. But, my dear sir, those vessels that represent the commerce of the world—the bustle, the activity, the signs everywhere about us, that denote a vast metropolis at hand—”

“Which in a few days I shall behold no more,” interrupted Mr. L’Estrange. “To scenes familiar to me in my infancy and boyhood I bid an eternal adieu on Friday.”

“In the Company’s service, I presume?” asked Goodall. “Your leave of absence expired?”

“No, sir. My friend, yonder, Captain Alexander, brought me over with him from India, and I return thither in his vessel. I had hoped to have ended my days here; but, unsuccessful in discovering one or two very near and dear to me, I must e’en go back to Delhi, and resume old habits, since I am not permitted to renew old affections.”

“Dear me! very unpleasant, though—very distressing that,” observed Goodall, taking a pinch of snuff; and he sat with his box open, gazing upon L’Estrange, who was now looking out abstractedly upon the water.

“I am very rude; pray pardon me,” said the melancholy man at length, turning round suddenly. “I was in one of my sad moods again. A pinch of your snuff may, perhaps, enliven me.”

Goodall handed him the box. He was about to return it, after taking a pinch, when something within the lid appeared strongly to attract his attention. There was yet light enough to examine it. Meanwhile, Goodall watched him smilingly.

“How strange!”

“Yes, rather so,” thought Goodall, nodding his head.

“How lovely!”

“Do you think so?” exclaimed Goodall, highly flattered; “a miniature of my wife.”

“Your wife! so young!”

“Not so very young. It was taken many years ago, long before we were married. I’ll tell you all about it. You must know, I had acquired the habit of

snuff-taking, and I really could not break myself of it, even though the woman I loved objected to the practice. Finding that, and being a dear girl—as she is still—she made me a present of this box, with her likeness on it, saying, that if I saw her looking at me every time I was about to take a pinch, I should, perhaps, make less frequent applications to my rappee."

"Ah! a good idea," sighed L'Estrange, and again sank into silence; but he was no longer in a state of abstraction. Several times he looked intently at Goodall, and was about to speak; but upon each occasion checked himself, apparently with a strong effort. Unluckily (so he appeared to consider it), just as he was about to offer some remark, or to make some communication, Goodall was beckoned by Worthington from the other side of the room, that he might pass his well-approved judgment on something "very curious and particular indeed," which he was at that moment carefully, and with a face of well-pleased anticipation, decanting.

A little before the company broke up, however, L'Estrange seized an opportunity which presented itself, and drew Goodall aside.

"My dear sir," he said, earnestly, "it has occurred to me very forcibly that you could render me a most essential service. I feel that it is of the utmost importance to me that I should have some private conversation with you."

"By all means, my dear sir," answered Goodall. "Let us have a little conversation. But it must be a little one, though," he added, "for the boat is expected every minute."

"This is neither the time nor the place for any communication," answered L'Estrange; "least of all, should the consequence ensue which I most fervently hope from it. Will you do me the favour of dining with me at the 'George and Vulture,' in Cornhill, to-morrow, at five precisely?"

"My dear L'Estrange," cried Goodall, patting the other gently and familiarly on the shoulder, for the very "curious and particular" was beginning to dispose him to look upon every man in the world as a friend and a brother, "that is quite out of the question. Here: I was to have dined at the London Tavern to-day; but friend Worthington brought me by force to this miserable place, where I've had a dinner not worth eating, and wine not worth speaking of. No, sir, I was once a

laceman in Mill-street, but I am now a country gentleman, and I never come into the City except when I can't help it, that is, twice a year, to see an old lady,—the old lady, I may say, who still keeps her sitting, and long may she continue to sit!—in Threadneedle-street. No, two days' dissipation running, my dear L'Estrange, would never do. Harriet—yes, you may look—that's my wife's name—would not allow that. I'll tell you what—you shall dine with me. Sharp four, recollect! and we can have a friendly talk," and out he flourished his card-case, bidding L'Estrange select one of the blackest amongst them; "for the man who did them is a shocking printer," said he; "and in half my cards makes me look like a gentleman who doesn't wish his name to be known, living at a place he wishes nobody to find out."

The quickness with which L'Estrange availed himself of this offer, and the eagerness with which he made himself acquainted with the address on the card, together with the uncommon care he showed that it should be safely lodged in his pocket-book, gave Goodall suddenly to understand that he was "in for it" now. But he was in no mood to encourage evil forebodings as to the morrow, and he took leave of L'Estrange (who was the guest that night of his friend the captain) in the highest conceivable spirits, repeating almost continually his "Don't forget, now," "Sharp four, remember," "Omnibus starts from the Bank at three," &c. Wafted in what seemed to be no time to London Bridge, he was placed without delay by that "excellent fellow, and jolly dear old friend of mine," Worthington, into a cab; and a slight shaking, followed by a grating sound (the lowering of the cab-steps), and a sharp click (the recoil of the gate-bell), assured him that he was *not* at the London Tavern, making a long and eloquent speech on the culinary and vinous merits and virtues of the Messrs. Lovegrove; but that he was really and truly about to be set down at Honiton Lodge, Canonbury.

Mrs. Goodall, whose imagination ever since half-past ten o'clock had been diving into the cells of station-houses, rambling through the wards of hospitals, and making itself a spectator of a few garotte robberies under varying but equally awful circumstances, felt greatly relieved on beholding her husband enter the room perfectly safe; and she greeted him with a smile of welcome, which he acknowledged with hilarious cordiality. But she could not, for the

life of her, make anything of the worthy man's bit-by-bit, disjointed narrative, which became more attenuated and incoherent every successive minute, and had no bearing whatever on the doings at the Samaritan Society's dinner. She wisely counselled him, therefore, to go to bed, adjourning him, as it were, for a more strict examination on the following morning.

Mr. Goodall entered the breakfast parlour a very different person from the lively little gentleman who had skipped into it two hours earlier on the preceding day; but he applied himself to his broiled ham with a tolerable appetite, and begged by anticipation for a cup of tea more than ordinary, and then entered, unasked, upon a true and faithful account of the events of yesterday. This, he was glad to find, as he proceeded, was received far more favourably than he had expected; so much so, that his wife had positively inquired whether "white-bait was really so delicious?" Nothing now remained to tell but the invitation to L'Estrange, and this required something by way of preface.

"My dear, it would seem that I am to dine out a good deal just now."

"What do you mean? Ah! that horrid dinner at the London Tavern has still to be eaten."

"Yes, so it has. But one of the party yesterday—a gentleman just returned from India—told me he thought I might be of especial service to him, and particularly wanted my advice on some matter. He invited me to dine with him to-day at the George and Vulture."

"But you did not accept—you are not going?" exclaimed Mrs. Goodall, in dismay.

"Who could refuse? but *I* did; so don't be angry. I invited him to dine with me."

"Well, upon my word, Goodall," said his wife, considerably relieved, although she did not choose to appear so, "you are one of the most foolish, easy men *I* ever was acquainted with. How do you know this person is a gentleman? He may be—"

She paused.

"Well?"

"One of the—"

Another pause.

"One of the what?" asked Goodall.

"One of the mob we read of in the newspapers—which," added Mrs. Goodall, prudishly, "is called by a vulgar name, signifying inflation."

"The swell mob!—ha! ha!" roared

Goodall, although he had a terrible headache. "'Signifying inflation!'" mimicking her. "There spoke the governess of former years, Harriet. Don't blush and be offended with me."

His wife gave him a playful pinch of the ear and left him, and his mind was now perfectly set at ease. It was with no small satisfaction that he heard various orders issued during the morning, which assured him (although he had not doubted the fact) that Mrs. Goodall's hospitality, on which she prided herself, and for which she was celebrated by his friends, was not likely to be wanting on this occasion.

The bell at the gate gave notice of the approach of a visitor just at the moment when Mr. Goodall's watch was telling him that such an event ought to happen, and he took what, on like occasions, was his accustomed place, at the parlour window, and scrutinized L'Estrange as he walked up the short path.

"Rather a fine style of man," said he, returning his eye-glass to his waistcoat. "I had not the best opportunity of observing him yesterday. Not one of the inflationists, I fancy."

"Mr. Goodall!"

But the door was opened, and the stranger was duly introduced and welcomed.

"God bless my soul!" "Dear me!" "How extraordinary!" Where could Mrs. Goodall have met that tall dark man, with the large, black, earnest eyes, before? There was that Captain Hamilton, when she had the tuition of the three Misses Lackland—but, no! that could not be. He died, poor man! of the liver complaint before they left Cheltenham. Then, again, when she was at Milan, with Lady Ramble. Didn't she well remember that night at the ball given by the Contessa D'Olce Fariente, when that tiresome Count Scampani so persecuted her? But, "Oh, absurd!" was not the count at that time of the same age as this man now—and it was twenty-two years ago! And was not this gentleman's name L'Estrange? Well, it was very odd! She could not tell what to make of it. Why did the man persist in gazing at her so very, very earnestly? It was almost rude. And yet she could not but admit no rudeness was intended.

The dinner passed off quietly. The mind of Mr. L'Estrange was, doubtless, full of the communication he intended to make. And yet he had praised highly the curry, which had been prepared under Mrs. Goodall's supervision. He addressed his

remarks chiefly to that lady—a circumstance which was very pleasing to Mr. Goodall, not because such a mark of politeness was uncommon, but for a totally opposite reason. It was ever so. Mrs. Goodall was a very superior woman, and people were apt to find *that* out. Mr. Goodall was not altogether under a delusion; but if he had been, let the happy and honest love of the man plead his excuse.

"*Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven,*"

entreats Byron, in a case which demands far more leniency from us.

When, after a glass or two of wine, Mrs. Goodall was about to retire, Mr. L'Estrange sprang to the door, and, as she passed out, said in a low voice, "I could wish very much to see you for one minute alone."

"What can this extraordinary person mean by asking such a thing? I have seen him before. What will Mr. Goodall think? But he shall be told all!"

Such were the hurried thoughts of Mrs. Goodall hastening upstairs, and terrified at the rustling of her dress, till she found refuge in the drawing-room, where she sat during the next half-hour puzzled and frightened, and wrought herself into a state of highly nervous excitement.

Meanwhile, the gentlemen sipped their wine below. Goodall, spite of the interest he took in some of the Indian adventures told him by L'Estrange, was anxious to know what that gentleman could possibly have to say to him in relation to affairs in which his advice could prove of any assistance. He hinted as much, and was rather surprised to be told by his guest that his object was already gained, and that he need not trouble his kind host with the communication he desired to make.

It was with evident joy that, shortly after rejoining the lady in the drawing-room, L'Estrange heard the servant desire her master to step out for a moment, for that he was wanted. Mrs. Goodall, oblivious of etiquette, was about to follow, but she could not move from her seat. There was that man's dark eye fixed upon her, and she was unable to withdraw her own from his gaze. At length, leaning forward, his elbow on his knee, he said with a smile that made her heart leap in her bosom, and in a voice which almost assured her what was coming—

"Am I so entirely changed, then? What, Harry, don't you remember Perry?"

Mr. Goodall heard his wife scream as he was coming upstairs; and hastening into the room, was so excessively astonished to see Mrs. Goodall caressing and uttering words of the most affectionate endearment to Mr. L'Estrange, and Mr. L'Estrange kissing alternately the cheek and forehead of Mrs. Goodall, that he was quite unprepared indignantly to order his green-eyed monster to be saddled immediately, that he might run full tilt at the delinquent.

"Ha, Herbert!" exclaimed Mrs. Goodall, when she perceived her husband, "here is our dear Peregrine come back to us at last." And so saying, she released herself from her brother, and flinging herself into Goodall's arms, gave way to a flood of the sweetest tears she had shed since, twenty years ago, he had made the poor governess promise to become his wife.

"Peregrine, my boy," cried Goodall, somewhat bewildered, "we are delighted to see you again" (he had never seen him before). "My dear fellow, give us your hand. But see, I must hold her. Ah! that's it—shake my elbow—that's right. Let us lead her to the sofa. Come—well; that's it—she's better now!"

All was soon explained. Peregrine was shocked to hear, on his return to England, of his father's failure under disgraceful circumstances, and that he had soon after destroyed himself. Concerning his mother, an old lady, once intimate with the family, told him that "Mrs. Wareham was dead, and that Miss Harriet had become a governess, and gone abroad." She had altogether lost sight of her. Of himself, L'Estrange had to relate many things which need not here be set down. On the death of his partner at Delhi, who had left him his fortune, he had taken his name; and having found his sister, he was now resolved on settling in his native country.

And he did so, taking a house not many hundred yards from that of his brother-in-law. The two are very good friends, holding, however, different opinions on many important points. Mrs. Goodall usually sides with her brother when both are present, and with Mr. Goodall when she is alone with him. She does not forget—"though Mr. Goodall sometimes seems to do so"—that she has a son, and that Peregrine is the boy's uncle; and it is observable, when she walks out or goes to church with her

brother, that she is always rather fidgety and nervous. "The unmarried ladies of the present day are such very forward

creatures." As yet, however, Mr. L'Estrange has not been caught—"as luck would have it!"

SELF-MADE MEN.

NO. I.—VALENTINE JAMERY DUVAL, IMPERIAL LIBRARIAN, AND KEEPER OF THE CABINET OF COINS AT VIENNA.

"For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honour peereth in the meanest habit."—SHAKSPEARE.

VALENTINE JAMERY DUVAL was born at Artonay, a village of Champagne, in France, in the year 1695. His father and mother were peasants of the humblest class; and he had scarcely attained his tenth year, when the death of both his parents left him, together with a numerous family of orphan brothers and sisters, exposed to the attacks of poverty and hunger in their most appalling shapes. Thus early was he accustomed to hardships and privations, which, by teaching him self-denial, eventually enabled him to conquer the difficulties that interposed between his poverty and his desire of knowledge; and to maintain, with unblemished reputation, the honourable station his abilities finally procured. At twelve years of age, Duval was taken into the service of a neighbouring farmer, and employed in taking care of young turkeys. At that time he could scarcely read; and his temper being too lively to rest satisfied with the trifling and monotonous nature of his employment, he frequently sought amusement in the frolics natural to his age. One of these, however, was attended with unfortunate consequences to himself. Having heard that turkeys had an aversion to the colour of red, he tied a piece of scarlet cloth round the neck of one of the flock under his care, to ascertain if that were the case; the bird, after manifesting great rage, and making every effort to rid itself of its encumbrance, took wing, flew until it was exhausted, and then dropped down dead. His master, resenting this loss, turned the poor boy out of doors, although aware of his destitute condition, and although the winter, which was the remarkably inclement one of 1709, was then beginning to set in. Left without resources, and conscious that his native village could not afford him any, young Duval quitted Artonay, and wandered towards Lorraine, scarcely knowing what object he had in view. On his

way he was seized with the small-pox, and must inevitably have perished for want of aid, had not a poor shepherd found him languishing in the road, near the village of Monglat, and took him to his sheep-cot, where he nursed him in the best manner his circumstances would allow. The extreme sufferings endured by Duval at this period made an impression on his mind which no subsequent good fortune could eradicate; and he wrote an affecting account of them for the perusal of a friend, many years after, when he was in the habit of sitting at the same table with royalty, and might, had his primitive simplicity and modesty allowed him, have been "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." The good shepherd had the pleasure to witness the gradual recovery of the object of his cares, who was soon enabled to proceed to Clezantine, a village in Lorraine. He there entered into the service of a shepherd, with whom he remained two years; but chance having led him to the hermitage of La Rochette, at the foot of the Borghesian mountains, his youthful fancy was captivated with the idea of religious retirement. The hermit, named Palemon, who was greatly revered for the sanctity of his life, willingly admitted a youth who showed himself so capable of receiving good impressions. At first he employed him in the care of his garden, but finding he had no common mind to deal with, directed him in the cultivation of his mind; and thus assisted, Duval became fully sensible of the spirit-stirring influence within him. He remained twelve months with Brother Palemon, who then gave him a letter of recommendation to the four hermits of St. Anne, not far from Luneville, whither he arrived in 1713, and was received by the brethren with much kindness. Duval was now entrusted with the care of six cows, and part of the cultivation of a few acres

of land belonging to the establishment. He was perfectly happy in his new situation, and contrived to find time to improve his mind in the intervals of his more laborious occupations. The hermits, perceiving his aptitude, taught him to write; and he learned arithmetic solely by his own industry. He next earnestly desired to make himself acquainted with geography and astronomy, subjects to which a mind inquiring as his was naturally directed by the nature of his employments, which kept him always in the open air, and turned his attention to the appearance of the heavens and surrounding objects. His desire to gain whatever information he could on these subjects impelled him to lay out all the money he possessed, which, however, was only five or six livres, in the purchase of a celestial chart and five common maps of different countries; and he constructed in the top of one of the highest oaks in the forest a kind of seat of wild vines, and retired to this aerial study at every leisure moment to enjoy his few books and maps, and to gaze uninterrupted upon the objects that opened such fields of inquiry to his daily expanding mind. But his means of gaining knowledge being in an exactly inverse ratio to his desires, he endeavoured to procure money by the sale of the skins of wild foxes and other animals, which he hunted often at the peril of his life; his courage and activity in this pursuit gradually put him into possession of a library, which, though small, afforded him the assistance he required; and it was soon augmented by an incident, simple in itself, but fraught with agreeable consequences. He happened to find a gold seal, with a triple face engraved on it, and caused a notice to be read in the church that the owner might have it again by applying to him at the hermitage. Some weeks after, an English gentleman, of the name of Forster, rode up to the gate of St. Anne's, and inquired for the seal, stating that it belonged to him. Duval had met by chance with *Menestrier's Elements of Heraldry*, from which he had gained a tolerable knowledge of the method of blazoning arms. He required the gentleman to blazon those on the seal before he would restore it to him. Mr. Forster laughed at the idea of the rustic, who stood before him in a coarse woollen coat and wooden shoes, pretending to judge by this mode his right to the seal; but Duval was resolute. Mr. Forster was obliged to describe the seal exactly, and in the proper heraldic terms; and on his doing so, it was immediately

restored to him. Struck with the singularity of the circumstance, Mr. Forster examined Duval in other branches of knowledge, and, delighted with his information, he gave him two guineas, and invited him to come and breakfast with him at Lunéville every holiday. Duval did so; and Mr. Forster not only benefited him with his advice, but enabled him to increase his library by the present of a crown-piece at every visit. It happened that as he was reclining one day at the foot of a tree, surrounded by his maps and charts, the sound of footsteps attracted his attention; and on looking up he perceived a gentleman gazing at him with a countenance in which benevolence was expressed, mixed with astonishment at the nature of his occupation.

"What are you about?" inquired the stranger, in a tone expressive of his surprise.

"Studying geography," replied Duval, laconically.

"Geography!" repeated the gentleman; "do you understand anything about it?"

"Most assuredly; I never trouble myself about things I do not understand."

"And what place are you seeking on that map?"

"I am trying to find the most direct way to Quebec."

"For what purpose?"

"That I may go there, and continue my studies in the university of that town."

"But why need you go for that purpose to the end of the world? There are universities nearer home superior to that of Quebec, and if you like I will point them out to you."

Whilst he was yet speaking a number of persons on horseback approached, and addressed him as the Count de Vidampiere: they were the retinue of the young Princes of Lorraine, to whom the Count and Baron Von Pfutschner were principal tutors, and who had been hunting in the forest with them. Count de Vidampiere having accidentally got separated from his party, had been thus providentially conducted to the young peasant. Duval now saw himself surrounded, not only by a train of courtiers, but also by the royal brothers Leopold, Clement, and Francis, afterwards the Emperor Francis I.

A variety of questions were put to him by his illustrious visitors, which he answered with the most engaging simplicity; and, charmed with the singularity of the adventure, Leopold, Duke of Lorraine, resolved that the talents of the youth should

not want for culture ; he accordingly took him under his protection, brought him to the court at Luneville, and, pleased with his frankness and capacity, committed the care of his education to Baron Pfutschner, who placed him in the Jesuits' College at Pont-à-Mousson. In this seminary Duval remained two years, devoting his chief attention to history, geography, and antiquities with such zeal that Duke Leopold, to give him an opportunity of further improvement, took him in his suite to Paris in 1718.

The splendour and luxury of this capital made but little impression, however, on the simple tastes and habits of Duval.

On the duke's return to Luneville he appointed Duval his librarian, and conferred on him the office of Professor of History in the Academy of Luneville. He had now his apartments and table at court, but he retained the simplicity of manners and strict temperate habits which had distinguished him in early youth. Shortly after, succeeding to the professor's chair, he began to deliver public lectures on history and antiquities, which were attended by many Englishmen of distinction then at the court of Luneville ; among whom was the immortal Chatham.

The generosity of his pupils and the economy of his own living soon rendered Duval rich, and the first-fruits of his wealth were consecrated by him to gratitude. He rebuilt the hermitage of St. Anne, the cradle of his own fortunes, and endowed it with all the savings of his industry.

Duke Leopold died in 1738, and his son Francis, who succeeded him, exchanged the Duchy of Lorraine for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The ducal library was accordingly transferred to Florence ; and Duval, being placed at its head, was of course obliged to take up his residence in that city. King Stanislaus, the new possessor of Lorraine, used the most urgent entreaties to prevail on him to continue in the office of Professor in the Academy of Luneville ; but his attachment to the family of his first patron would not permit him to listen to the proposal. He now turned his attention to the study of medals, a favourite object of pursuit with him, and on which he had already delivered a course of lectures in Lorraine. He began a collection of ancient and modern coins ; and whilst engaged in this pursuit he was agreeably surprised by a summons from the Emperor Francis, who happened to have formed a similar

design about the same period, and who sent for him to Vienna to be the keeper of his new Cabinet of Coins, which it was his ambition to render the most complete in Europe.

Duval had now a house assigned to him in the imperial quarter, near Vienna, and generally dined at the Emperor's table once a week. How different from the time when he was saved from perishing by a morsel of black bread given to him by a poor shepherd ! He was beloved by all the Imperial family ; though, from the modesty of his temper and the retirement of his habits, he was scarcely acquainted with the persons of many of its individuals. The elder archduchesses passing him one day without his appearing to notice them, their brother, the King of the Romans, who was at a little distance behind them, and who perceived his abstraction of mind, asked him if he knew who they were.

" No, sire," he replied.

" I do not at all wonder at it," said the prince, laughing ; " it is because my sisters are not antiques."

To a sound judgment, improved by study and reflection, Duval united great knowledge, and a strictness of virtue which endeared him to all who were acquainted with him. His works were published at Paris, in 1784, in two octavo volumes.

Finding his health somewhat impaired by his close application to study, Duval was induced in 1752 to try a journey to his native country, for the purpose of re-establishing it. On his way back he visited his native village of Artonay ; purchased his paternal cottage, which the indigence of his brothers and sisters, whilst he was yet poor himself, had forced them to sell ; built on the site of it a commodious house for schoolmasters of the village ; and conferred a lasting happiness on the rest of the inhabitants by causing wells to be dug in Artonay and a neighbouring hamlet, in order that they might always be supplied with good water, from the deficiency of which they had before frequently suffered the greatest inconvenience.

Duval lived to the age of seventy-nine, without being conscious of a single infirmity. In his eightieth year he was all at once seized with a disorder, but by the cares of the Empress he was snatched for a time from the jaws of death ; but the respite was only short. In the following year he was seized with a fever, which terminated, on the 3rd of November, 1775, his blameless and happy life.

FELICIA HEMANS.

THERE are few modern poets whose works have become such familiar household words as the poems of Felicia Hemans—but less so, however, amongst ourselves than with our cousins across the water; for in America her poems were, if they do not now remain, universally popular. On many accounts the life of such a writer cannot fail to be interesting, and we shall now present a few of the leading facts of her brief history.

Felicia Dorothea Browne was born in Duke-street, Liverpool, on the 25th September, 1793. Her father was an Irish gentleman, engaged in mercantile pursuits at Liverpool: her mother was descended from an ancient Venetian family, and had numbered amongst her ancestors several who had attained to the dignity of Doge of Venice.

Felicia was remarkable for her extreme beauty, and, when a child, was an object almost of adoration. Her complexion is said to have been “brilliant—her hair long, curling, and golden, and remained silken and profuse and wavy to the last.” She was the subject of more than common interest, and the prophecies respecting her future lot made a deep impression upon her sensitive mind. “That child is not made for happiness, I know: her colour comes and goes too fast”—was the incautious remark of a lady in the hearing of the young poet. She never forgot this remark.

Her mother was a richly gifted and accomplished woman, and well qualified for the task of educating such a daughter. Felicia loved her with all the ardour of her affectionate and enthusiastic nature. The first attempts of the young poet at literary composition commenced at the almost infantile age of seven years, and her chief delight was reciting poems and fragments of plays. The play of *Douglas*, which it was not known that she had read, she repeated entire—almost supernaturally, as was said by an astonished auditor.

The mercantile embarrassments of her father, when Felicia was little more than five years old, compelled the relinquishment of their Liverpool establishment and removal to North Wales—a happy change as regarded the tastes of Felicia and the development of her poetical powers. The house was an old spacious mansion, lying close to the sea-shore, and in front shut

in by rocky hills. This was Grwych (pronounced Griech), near to Abergele, in Denbighshire. She almost revelled in the beauties and perfect freedom of the new abode. Perched in an apple-tree, for shade and seclusion, she read Shakspeare, and erected atmospheric castles. She loved the loneliness of the sea-shore—too much, in fact—for, when quite a child, she would get up slyly, after her attendants thought her safe asleep, and indulge herself with a stolen bath in the ocean.

One fact to be noted in her early history is, that she was never at school. “Had she been sent to one,” her biographer remarks, “she might, probably, have run away.” The only things she was regularly taught were French, English grammar, and the rudiments of Latin, taught her by a gentleman who used to deplore “that she was not a man, to have borne away the highest honours at college.” School or no school, however, she acquired such an amount of classical and other learning as few men who have been at college acquire, or, at any rate, retain. She read French, German, Italian, and Spanish. The English poets, and the best prose writers, and the best of the current literature of her time, were perfectly familiar to her. She had an excellent voice, with which in an after year she delighted Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, who observed, on hearing her sing to her own playing on the harp—“One would say you had too many accomplishments, Mrs. Hemans, were they not all made to give pleasure to those around you.”

Her first poems,* containing some verses written when she was only eight years of age, were published in 1808—the second, entitled *The Domestic Affections*, in 1812. An unkind review of these early

* ON MY MOTHER'S BIRTH-DAY.

WRITTEN AT THE AGE OF EIGHT.

Clad in all their brightest green,
This day the verdant fields are seen;
The tuneful birds begin their lay,
To celebrate thy natal day.

The breeze is still, the sea is calm,
And the whole scene combines to charm;
The flowers revive this charming May,
Because it is thy natal day.

The sky is blue, the day serene,
And only pleasure now is seen;
The rose, the pink, the tulip gay,
Combine to bless thy natal day.

productions had such an effect upon the young authoress as to confine her to her bed for several days. This, it is said, was the only instance in which she had to taste the gall of criticism. It is probable that the dose of critical bitters had a salutary effect upon her future character, stimulating her to intenser study and deeper meditation.

In 1812 the poet was married to Captain Hemans. Of this union the record is exceedingly brief. Her husband's health, it is said, had been much impaired by the vicissitudes and hardships of military life. He was in the disastrous retreat upon Corunna, and also in the expedition to Walcheren, where he nearly lost his life from the prevailing fever. After a few years, when five children had been born to them, Captain Hemans' increasing ailments obliged him to resort to the climate of Italy. Mrs. Hemans remained at her home in the Welsh mountains, in order to carry on her literary pursuits and the education of her children. The poet and her husband never met again. It may be supposed the union was not a happy one. The sole "memorials" of the union were the five children, to whom she was ardently devoted; there is frequent reference to them in her letters.

A small woodland dingle, near Rhylion (the last and most favourite of her residences in Wales, and where many of her best poems were written), was her favourite retreat: here she would spend long summer mornings to read, and project, and compose, while her children played about her. "Whenever one of us brought her a flower," writes one of them, "she was sure to introduce it in her next poem." Writing to Miss Joanna Baillie, in 1827, she says. "My children were much pleased with your kind mention of them; the one who had been reading Ethwold with such interest was not a little amused to find himself designated as a girl. I have none but boys; a circumstance I often am inclined to regret; for I married so young that they are even now beginning to spring from childhood into youth themselves, and in the course of a few years, I must expect that they will long for, and be connected with, another world than the green fields in which they are now contented to play around me. Let me, however, be thankful for the happiness I at present enjoy, and for the privileges which peculiar circumstances have afforded me, and which is granted to so few mothers, of being able

to superintend their education, and give what I hope will be enduring impressions on their minds. Now I am on this subject, dear madam, I am strongly tempted to relate a little anecdote, which I think will interest you—(mamas are *always prone* to believe their children *must* be interesting)—of one of them at eleven years old. I had been reading to him Lord Byron's magnificent address to the sea:—

"· Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!"

He listened, in almost breathless attention, and exclaimed, the moment I had finished it, 'It is very grand indeed! but how much finer it would have been, mamma, if he had said, at the close, that God had measured out all those waters in the hollow of his hand!' I could not help being struck with the true wisdom thus embodied in the simplicity of childhood!"

For some years her mother or sister took all the management of domestic concerns off her hands; but on the death of the former and the marriage of the latter these cares devolved upon herself, and she felt the pressure all the more from her former freedom from domestic anxieties. In the expectation of greater facilities for the education of her boys, she removed to Wavertree, a suburban village of Liverpool. The change was in no way conducive to her comfort, nor was the main design of the removal promoted, the educational capabilities of Liverpool at that time being limited. She was exposed to the intrusion of "society," with whom she had no sympathy, who wasted her time and teased her with "morning calls," and formal dinner parties, and other fussy conventionalities, against which she had a strong antipathy. When it was possible, and almost when it was not, she bore these small trials with gaiety, as many of her letters bear witness. She was sadly pestered with offers from would-be great people, who wanted to "patronize" her. "Can you conceive anything," she observes, in one of her letters, "so innately, so unutterably vulgar, as the style of mind they display? The attempt at patronage, the low-bred enumeration of great names, which, so arranged, almost remind me of the list in the *Bath Guide*:—

"· Lord Cram and Lord Vultur,
Sir Brandish O'Cultur,
With Marshal Carowzer,
And old Lady Mouser.'"

I answered these precious documents, certainly without unpoliteness, but with some portion of what Miss Jewsbury calls my "*passive disdain*."

Miss Jewsbury, in her delightful book, *The Three Histories*, has drawn a picture of her friend, Mrs. Hemans, which, her biographer says, "though somewhat idealized, is as faithful to the truth as it is gracefully written."

"Egeria was totally different from any other woman I had ever seen, either in Italy or England. She did not dazzle—she subdued me. Other women might be more commanding, more versatile, more acute; but I never saw one so exquisitely feminine. She was lovely without being beautiful; her movements were features; and if a blind man had been privileged to pass his hand over the silken length of her hair, that when unbraided flowed round her like a veil, he would have been justified in expecting softness and a love of softness, beauty and a perception of beauty, to be distinctive traits of her mind: nor would he have been deceived. Her birth, her education, but, above all, the genius with which she was gifted, combined to inspire a passion for the ethereal, the tender, the imaginative, the heroic,—in one word, the beautiful. It was in her a faculty divine, and yet of daily life; it touched all things, but, like a sunbeam, touched them with a golden finger. Anything abstruse or scientific was unintelligible and distasteful to her: her knowledge was extensive and various; but, true to the first principle of her nature, it was poetry that she sought in history, scenery, character, and religious belief,—poetry that guided all her studies, governed all her thoughts, coloured all her conversation. Her nature was at once simple and profound. Her voice was a sad, sweet melody, her spirits reminded me of an old poet's description of an olive tree, with its

"Golden lamps hid in a night of green;"

or of those Spanish gardens where the pomegranate grows beside the cypress. Her gladness was like a burst of sunlight; and if, in her depression, she resembled Night, it was Night wearing her stars. I might describe and describe for ever, but I should never succeed in portraying Egeria; she was a muse, a grace, a veritable child, a dependent woman—the Italy of human beings."

As her experience of the trials of life deepened, she found something more than

poetry in religious belief. Religion was not only a solace but a principle, and few poets have left the world with so little they might wish unwritten or unthought.

At a very early period of her literary history her writings attracted the notice of the poet Shelley, who addressed to her "an extraordinary correspondence,"—of which, however, she did not think much. She was at one time much taken up with his poetry, and still more so with that of Byron (reference will be found to her poetry in one of Lord Byron's letters); but the matchless purity and beauty of Wordsworth's poetry, and personal intercourse with the poet himself, weaned her considerably from her earlier favourites. She had formed in her enthusiastic mind an ideal of Byron which was far purer and nobler than the reality. She constantly wore a brooch containing a lock of the poet's hair; but when his Memoirs appeared, her pure feelings were shocked at the erratic course of the modern Mephistopheles, and from that time she never wore the relic. "She was extremely anxious to see the Memoirs,—but her disappointment at the extracts which appeared in the periodicals was so great as to prevent her reading the book when published. 'The book itself,' she said, in one of her notes, 'I do not mean to read; I feel as if it would be like entering a tavern, and I shall not cross the threshold.' If any passage of her most favourite writers offended her delicacy, the leaf was torn out without remorse; and every one familiar with her little library will have been stopped by many a pause and chasm."

Among the most pleasing episodes of her brief history was her excursion to Scotland, and her cordial reception by Sir Walter Scott. She remained at Abbotsford about a fortnight, during which Sir Walter walked and talked with her, and drove out with her, and showed her every interesting spot and thing in that most interesting locality.

Still more pleasing and fruitful of good results was her excursion to the Lakes, and intercourse with Wordsworth, whose character and writings she held in the highest estimation. Her copy of Wordsworth's works was her poetical breviary: there was scarcely a page that had not its mark of admiration, or its marginal comment or illustration. She was unwearied in recommending the study of his poems, and in pointing out and repeating their finest passages. Two extracts only from

her letters on this delightful visit can we find room for. "There is," she observes, "a daily beauty in his (Mr. Wordsworth's) life, which is in such lovely harmony with his poetry, that I am thankful to have witnessed and *felt* it. He gives me a good deal of his society, reads to me, walks with me, leads my pony when I ride, and I begin to talk with him as a sort of *paternal* friend. The whole of this morning he kindly passed in reading to me a great deal of Spenser, and afterwards his own "Laodamia," my favourite "Tintern Abbey," and many of those noble sonnets which you, like myself, enjoy so much. His reading is very peculiar, but to my ear delightful; slow, solemn, *earnest* in expression, more than any I have ever heard: when he reads or recites in the open air, his deep rich tones seem to proceed from a spirit-voice, and belong to the religion of the place; they harmonize so fitly with the thrilling tones of woods and waterfalls."

But all was not poetry: even Wordsworth had a prose side to his character. "Imagine, my dear—," wrote Mrs. Hemans, "a bridal present made by Mr. Wordsworth to a young lady in whom he is much interested—a poet's daughter, too! You will be thinking of a brooch in the shape of a lyre, or a butterfly-shaped aigrette, or a forget-me-not ring, or some other 'small gear.' Nothing of the sort; but a good handsome substantial pair of scales to hang up in her store-room! 'For you must be aware, my dear Mrs. Hemans,' he said to me, gravely, 'how necessary it is occasionally for every lady to see things weighed herself!' 'Poveretta me!' I looked as *good as I could*, and, happily for me, the poetic eyes are not very clear sighted; so I believe no suspicion derogatory to my notability of character has yet flashed upon the mighty master's mind: indeed, I told him that I looked upon scales as particularly graceful things, and had great thoughts of having my picture taken with a pair in my hand!"

In America Mrs. Hemans possessed some valued friends—amongst them Dr. Channing. The very great popularity of her writings in America is owing probably to the circumstance of their being reprinted in cheap and popular editions, and thus rendered accessible to the lowliest in the land; still more, perhaps, is it owing to the universal prevalence of education in America, by which the poorest acquire a degree of literary taste and culture which is or was unknown among

ourselves. A proposition was made to Mrs. Hemans to take up her abode in the United States, and a respectable maintenance was to be guaranteed to her, the purpose being to establish a periodical under her editorship. She declined the proposal, being altogether ignorant, she said, of the duties of such a vocation.

Many of Mrs. Hemans' poems were first published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and other periodicals; others appeared at no distant intervals from each other in volumes. Space does not allow of many remarks upon her poems, nor even an enumeration of them. Amongst the most beautiful are many of her shorter poems.

FAR AWAY.

Far away ! my dreams are far away,
When the midnight stars and shadows reign ;
"Gentle child !" my mother seems to say,
"Follow me where home shall smile again,"

Far away ! my hope is far away,
Where love's voice young gladness may restore ;
O then, dove ! now soaring through the day,
Lend me wings to reach the brighter shore,
Far away !

“The Forest Sanctuary” is considered her best poem, but even this is scarcely equal to her capabilities: upon the whole, as regards any “great poem,” Mrs. Hemans can scarcely be said to have produced anything equal to her great powers and undoubted genius. Her best poetry is among her smaller pieces. “The Graves of a Household” is an exceedingly beautiful poem; equally so are “The Prodigal’s Return” and “England’s Dead.” “Dartmoor,” for which she obtained the prize of fifty guineas, offered by the Royal Society of Literature, is a noble poem. There is a great contrast between her letters and poems: the latter are for the most part of a sad and “funereal” character, while nothing can be more sprightly than the general tone of her letters.

In 1831 Mrs. Hemans removed to Ireland; this removal, like the former one, was dictated by maternal motives; she expected, and in this instance, not without reason, that there would be superior educational advantages for her boys. In other respects, the change was not more agreeable than the former removal, and the anxiety and wear and tear

of her sensitive spirit which those changes occasioned tended greatly to strengthen the malady under which, in a few years, she was destined to sink. She was subject to distressing palpitations of the heart, and finally to dropsy. As her end approached, she became more calm and resigned than was natural for a spirit of so much vivacity and acute sensibility. The Scriptures were her daily study, and she also passed much time over the writings of our old divines, particularly Jeremy Taylor, for whom she had the greatest veneration. She read the poetry of Wordsworth with increased attention, and never, excepting when illness prevented, passed a single day without reading something of his. "I have heard her say," observed the companion of her latest years, "that Wordsworth and Shelley were once the spirits contending to obtain the mastery over hers. That the former soon gained the ascendancy is not, I think, to be wondered at; for, much as she delighted in Shelley, she pitied him still more. In defining the distinction between the genius of Wordsworth and Byron, I remember her saying that it required a higher power to still a tempest than to raise one, and that she considered it the part of the former to calm, and of the latter to disturb the mind."

She received great kindness from her Irish friends, and her last illness was sought to be alleviated by a removal to

the summer residence of the Archbishop of Dublin, which was placed entirely at her disposal. But disease and anxiety, with which her sensitive nature was so ill-fitted to struggle, gradually wore away her strength. On the 26th of April (1835) she worthily closed her career as a poet by dictating the "Sabbath Sonnet,"

"How many blessed groups this hour are bending,
Through England's primrose meadow-paths,
their way
Toward spire and tower, midst shadowy elms
ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallowed
day!
The halls, from old heroic ages grey,
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard blooms the soft winds
play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream. *I* may not tread
With them those pathways—to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound; yet, O my God! I bless
Thy mercy that with Sabbath peace hath filled
My chastened heart, and all its throbings
stilled
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness."

From this time she sank gently, until the 16th of May, when her spirit departed. There is a tablet erected by her brothers in the cathedral of St. Asaph, "In memory of Felicia Hemans, whose character is best portrayed in her writings."

PASSING AWAY OF THE OLD YEAR.

THE bells with joyous pealing
Welcome the future year;
And the midnight breeze is bringing
Their music to my ear.
Sweet bells! thy notes are swelling
With harmony sublime:
Although each note is telling
The rapid flight of time.

Ere ye have ceased your merry peal
Another year will dawn;
Say, what will that fresh year reveal?
What on its course be borne?

And as thy notes of gladness
Welcome the new-born year,
Say, what of joy and sadness
Will in its scenes appear?

Whilst reverently kneeling,
I breathe a fervent prayer:
Subdued be every feeling,
And every earthly care:
The old tower clock has signalled
This hour to be thy last;
And ruthless Time has mingled
The old year—with the Past.

THE FORTUNES OF A HIGHLAND HEIRESS.

THERE is a beautiful glen near Loch Earn, through which a stream murmurs gaily as it flows on to join its sister waters in the lake. The hills that rise on either side are bold, yet graceful; rocks crested with pine and alder, and banks covered with wild roses, with the rowan waving on the hill-side, and the weeping birch beside the stream, vary its features as you pass along; and half-way down the glen are the ruins of an ancient stronghold, whence the Grahams of Ardrona, almost the wealthiest of that name, were wont of old to frown defiance on their feudal foes.

The heat of a summer day was passing before the cool breeze that wandered down the glen, as the Lady of Ardrona looked on the glancing leaves, and glittering current, and the bright flowers that smiled so gaily in the sunshine. But it was not of them she thought; she watched for the return of her husband, who had been for months absent on the service of his king at Edinburgh. A messenger had that morning reached her with the tidings of his near approach, and every sound was now magnified into the tramp of horses, and every wave of the distant trees seemed the floating of plumes and tartans. Then, restless and impatient, the lady walked along the border of the stream with one of her maidens and her only child, the little Lilius Graham, the richest heiress in all Perthshire.

Gaily the child bounded along the fern-tufted hillocks and mossy rocks, gathering the wild flowers and chasing the butterflies that flitted through the sunny air: and fondly the mother's eye followed her light form, and marked the gladness which spoke in every movement. Suddenly Lilius started, and uttered a cry of joy—already her quick ear had caught the tread of horses' feet, before the sound had reached her mother, and she sprang lightly forward, but in a few moments retreated to her mother's side; for though two persons rode rapidly down the glen, they both were strangers.

In another minute they had followed her. The foremost, a handsome man, with the look and bearing of gentle birth, raised his bonnet, and said, courteously—

"Might I ask, lady, what glen this is?"

"It is Glen Sheen," was the reply.

The horseman bowed with greater de-

ference—"And this fair child is, then, the heiress of Ardrona?" he added, bending forward and holding out his hand.

The little Lilius raised her deep blue eyes to the stranger's with the frankness and boldness of a child who has never been taught distrust or fear, and placed her hand in his before her mother was aware of the intention.

A sudden flash shot from the horseman's eyes, telling both of mirth and triumph, and saying lightly—"Other homes are pleasant as Ardrona or Glenroyst," he raised the child from the ground, and placed her before him, then, setting spurs to his horse, galloped with his companion up the glen again, their laughter mingling with the mother's cry of anguish, and the screams by which her maiden strove to call their clansmen to the rescue.

But few minutes elapsed ere a score of Grahams were rushing up the glen, headed by a kinsman of Ardrona; yet fleet as they were of foot and keen of sight, no trace of the child or her captors was visible. They had turned up some narrow pass, or lay hidden in some dark nook, but had not long kept to the glen, down which the Grahams soon met Ardrona himself, riding with a strong band of his retainers; and fierce was his indignation on learning his loss, the boldness and insolence with which the deed had been committed appearing to aggravate both the insult and the wrong.

Far and wide the Grahams spread through corrie, dell, and glen, but all in vain. The strangers escaped with their prize, while they were themselves unknown and unsuspected; and bitterly her kinsmen murmured at the thought that the heiress of Ardrona was destined to carry the wealth and influence, and the broad lands of her father, to swell the power of some hostile clan—as much was intimated by the horseman's words, "Other homes are as pleasant as Ardrona or Glenroyst," for child as she was Lilius had been already named as the future bride of her kinsman, Graham of Glenroyst's eldest son.

But the mother's tears, the father's fierce resentment and the kinsmen's threats alike were useless. Time passed on—snows fell and melted, and the flowers of many summers flushed beauty through the glens, but still the blue eyes and

sweet smile of Lilius Graham were but a memory in Glen Sheen.

Meanwhile, Lilius wept for those whom she had left, but the tears of childhood are soon stayed, and the kind words and caresses of those who now surrounded her soon won her back to gaiety. But they knew not how deep in her heart were treasured the love and remembrance of the home from which they had borne her, and the parents whose affection seemed as a beautiful but fleeting dream.

The latest sunbeams were glancing on a rugged hill, and flashing on the wild torrent that bounded down its side, while at its foot the graceful rowans waved their clusters of snowy blossoms, and primroses spangled the fresh green turf with golden stars. Farther away floated bright waters, glancing silver-like in the setting sun, and over them glided a boat, from which gay voices and joyous laughter came on the ear.

A girl sat on the grassy bank; she was very lovely, with eyes bluer than the evening sky, and bright hair, where its sunlight seemed to linger. At her feet leaned a young man, looking up at her earnestly, and speaking words of deep and passionate affection; but a cloud was on the girl's fair brow, and her eyes were averted, and there came no answer to the tale of love which was poured forth so eloquently.

"Lilius!" pleaded the youth, "can love like mine win no return?"

And now the girl turned her eyes upon him mournfully, but there was a bitterness mingling with her sorrowful tone as she replied, "Why seek to win it? your father gives to you my hand, and never asks where is the heart."

"But do I not prize it, Lilius?—why must you ever look so coldly on me, and find no word of mine have power to please you? Would any one might teach me how to win you—at least, to listen to me without prejudice and anger!"

"I will teach you," said the girl, proudly. "Restore me to my kindred and my home, and once more free within her father's halls, then will Lilius Graham listen to you as one who loves her; but thus, and thus only would she be wooed, and not as the captive who must needs be grateful because the seeming courtesy of soft words is granted to her. You know but little of a maiden's heart, Kenneth Campbell, if so you think it can be won!"

Words of passionate remonstrance were on the lover's lips, but ere he could utter

them, a step was on the grass, and a young stranger was seen approaching. Lilius looked on him carelessly, but a frown at the interruption gathered on her companion's brow, though he arose and returned the intruder's greeting; the latter merely inquired the road to the neighbouring village of Invergowan, saying that a gilly was to meet him there with his horses, but that he had lost his way among the hills. But Highland hospitality is as inherent as Highland pride, and could not neglect to claim the stranger as a guest.

"Glenkinnon is nearer than Invergowan," said the young Campbell; "will you not tarry there and rest to-night? your attendant and horses shall be sent for, and on the morrow you will go all the swifter on your way."

The traveller thanked him for his courtesy.—"But it may not be," he added, smiling; "my lord waits for me in Glen Almond, and already I have loitered, and he will call me laggard—a name that Graham of Glenroyst will little like to fit his kinsman."

A lightning flash of joy passed over the face of Lilius at these words, but another had joined them while Graham spoke, and a man of gay, frank, but haughty bearing stepped between her and her young kinsman. The keen glance of the youth's bright eyes had rested for a moment on the maiden, but he withdrew it so rapidly, that she hoped none but herself had observed it; and with the same unembarrassed manner he continued to decline the hospitality of Campbell of Glenkinnon, who now in person stood before him.

Then Glenkinnon bade him farewell, and led away his passive but reluctant captive to join the gay party that had landed from the boat, while his son guided the young Graham on his way to Invergowan.

Many and bitter were the tears that the lonely Lilius shed that night. One of her own name, of her own kindred, it seemed, had been near her, yet turned coldly, carelessly, unconsciously away, while she dared not, by word or sign, declare herself, lest his life perchance might be the forfeit. And now he was gone, and she was alone; the only chance she might ever have of making her position known to her friends had passed by, and she was still a captive, helpless, and perhaps forgotten by those who used to love her; or it might be that long ago they

had mourned her dead, while still she lived to weep over the near approach of the day that should make her Kenneth Campbell's bride.

Already guests were gathering for the bridal, and none asked if the young bride smiled or shuddered at their coming. It was enough for them that the lands of Ardrona would be thus secured to their clan in future years; and what to them were the tears or sorrow of her by whom they came? True, Kenneth wooed her, and with a gentleness to which nought, save his ardent love, could have softened his proud spirit. But he wooed her as one who must perforce be his, while, with all a woman's pride, Lilius's heart revolted at the compulsion, and scorned the love that denied her power to choose.

Three days had passed, and again the sunset rays were gilding the calm waters of the Lochy as they flowed silently along. And Lilius sat in a little dell near the bank, thinking sadly of the morrow, which was to witness her dreaded bridal. A thousand times had the idea of flight suggested itself; but it was wild. Alone there, amid unknown hills and pathless glens, far away from all her kindred, and with Campbells overspreading the whole country that lay between, there was no escape for her; and well she knew her feeble voice would be unheeded in its protest against the union they were resolved to force upon her.

"Lilius Graham!" whispered a voice, so low, she half thought it was but fancy formed the words from the murmur of the trembling leaves. Yet she arose, and glanced around, and in a moment her young clansman sprang down the hill to her side.

"Lilius! Lilius!—Found at last!" he said hurriedly. "I know it is the one we have long sought in vain. Your mother's face—that look of joy—I know it can be no other than Ardrona's child!"

Her hand was in his ere he had concluded, and her frank, glad greeting owned at once the bond of common name and blood—for if Glenroyst's kinsman, he must be also hers. Then, in few words, he told her what joy the discovery of the long lost one would shed throughout her clan, and with what triumph they would bear her back to her native glen, ere many suns had set.

The light passed at once from Lilius's brow. "I am found, yet lost!" she answered mournfully. "Oh, save me, ere it is too late!—for before to-morrow's sun

has set, I shall be Kenneth Campbell's bride."

"Not while I live!" exclaimed her kinsman. "No, Lilius; whatever it costs, you shall be saved. Long sought, and mourned, and sighed for by your clan, it is not thus that I have found to lose you now!"

A warning cry from Lilius checked him, and he turned to find himself in the grasp of two tall Campbells, while their lord stood confronting him with a mocking smile. Kenneth, too, was there—a dark cloud on his brow, and a wild glare in his eyes, as though they would have flashed destruction on the prisoner.

"You are welcome," said Glenkinnon, ironically. "We needed such a guest to grace our bridal. Glad tidings shall you bear to Glenroyst, that the heiress of Ardrona has wedded Glenkinnon's son."

An indignant reply rose to the youth's lips, but Lilius's pleading look restrained him; and for her sake he was silent, merely answering Kenneth's fierce glance by one as defying, ere, at Glenkinnon's command, he was hurried away, to chafe in his dark prison at the thought of the taunts and menaces, and the professions of love also, to which Lilius might be doomed meanwhile to listen.

How gaily the morrow's sunlight flashed brilliancy on hill and moor, and on the smooth calm river, and the wooded shores between which it glided on! And proud and exulting was the aspect of the assembled guests—for the deed done long ago, and now its sequel, were well suited to the spirit of the time and country. The hour came at length, and, pale as the white roses that bound her sunny hair, Lilius Graham was led forward by the captor of her childhood—the proud and brave, but unscrupulous Campbell of Glenkinnon. And pale even as herself, her young clansman stood by to witness the union which would destroy at once the hopes and dreams which his strange meeting with one so long unheard and despaired of by all her kindred had been sufficient to inspire his impetuous and enthusiastic spirit. Yet there was a sternness on his brow, and a light in his eye, which made the Campbells keep close watch upon their captive.

Some threat, in which her kinsman was perhaps concerned, had been employed, for in silence Lilius allowed herself to be led forward and placed by the side of Kenneth, who, with every feature glowing with ill-suppressed passion, bore little of a

bridegroom's aspect. Then the ceremony began, and the moment came when the trembling bride was called on to give her assent.

"Forbear, Lilius!" cried a warning voice. It was her kinsman's. But the next instant Glenkinnon's hand had struck him to the earth with his dagger-hilt; and bright steel gleamed in more than one fierce Campbell's grasp; and the youth's life hung on the caprice of his indignant foes, when a cry of surprise and fear arose without, and a gallant band of Grahams burst like a mountain torrent upon the bridal guests.

There was a wild, brief struggle. The clash of dirk and claymore, and the shouts of mortal strife, mingled with the cries of woman's fear and horror; while Lilius, shuddering at the sounds and scene around her, could almost have wished that any fate were hers, rather than for her the blood which flowed should have been shed. Closely the Campbells gathered round her, fighting bravely, as became their name; and fiercely the Grahams pressed on them, striking down chief and laird who barred their way to the trembling prize, for which they fought with an eagerness that needed not the cheering voice of Glenroyst, who headed this onset, to urge them on.

At length one bold, resistless, effort, and she was won. A stunning blow from the late captive laid Kenneth senseless at his father's feet, and Lilius was torn from Glenkinnon's circling arm; then, with a wild cry of joy and triumph, the Grahams rushed away with the same impetuosity with which they came, bearing down all opposition, and gaining the hills ere the Campbells' gathering tune had collected the overwhelming force which was quickly ready to obey Glenkinnon's bidding.

Swift messengers bore the tidings along glen and over moor, to arouse the bold and powerful clan that brooked little crossing of their will. But fast as they sped, the Grahams fled faster through the wild passes which lay between them and their lands; pausing not for rest, but pressing on as men who felt that far more than life, the honour and interest of their clan, hung on their speed. And how gladly the rescued one beheld each hill fade in the distance; and how sweet were the words of her young kinsman, who kept ever close at her side, telling how far the foe were left behind, and cheering her with assurances of safety and of happiness.

The moon shone on the gleaming torrents and dream-like hills, and again the sunbeams glowed on rock and plain; still on they went; every horse and pony seized for their use as they swept along; and that sun looked on the joy which welcomed the heiress of Ardrona to her father's halls.

Quickly the Campbells followed them. But the Grahams would fly no further, resolving in Ardrona's strong tower to stand, and brave their enemies; and the warning flew through their own clan summoning laird and kern alike to its defence. Then rapidly her assembled kinsmen determined to wed Lilius at once to one of her name and race, though the young Glenroyst, long destined for her, was far absent in the Lowlands; his father even approving of the expedient, which the interests of the clan demanded.

"There are other youths here bold and true, worthy to guard Ardrona's child and heritage," said the father of Lilius, frankly; "so, among those present, we must now choose her bridegroom. For sooner would I see my child wedded to the poorest and humblest of her name than carry her broad lands into our foeman's clan."

How the cheek of Lilius paled, and her heart trembled, as she listened; for until it was now spoken of around her, she had not known that her hand was long since promised, and she heard it only to feel how easily and lightly her fate could be altered and decided. Had she then been snatched from the doom she feared, only to meet one it might be darker still? Had foes and friends alike no mercy for her feelings—no thought of the heart which, heavier now than ever, knew that there was one who was dearer to it than all the world beside, and to part from whom would add a deeper sting to the loveless lot to which they so coldly doomed her.

There was scarce a minute's pause, when the youth who had first recognised her at Glenkinnon, and who had stood silent all the while, stepped forward, and knelt before her.

"Lilius," he said, "could the devotion of one who loves you well render you happy? Give to me your hand, and I will guard you from evil and sorrow while life, and strength, and sense are left to me. I loved you while yet I believed there stood between us a barrier which I might not pass—while yet I believed that Ion of Glenroyst would win the love I would resign everything to gain. Can you, then, listen to me, and trust to me

your happiness? Yet, if to give to me your hand would grieve you, I will not ask the gift."

But the flush which rose to her brow, and the smile which lit her face spoke not of grief; and the few low words that Lilius uttered told of a love which had trembled at its own existence. Then a loud burst of rejoicing from the kinsmen shook the hall with the mingled tones of approval and of triumph, and pride sat on Ardrona's brow; but it was not until their hands were joined for ever that Lilius knew that it was to the chief of her name that she had thus hastily been wedded.

And joyous was the bridal though weapons glittered, and the pipers pealed forth

strains of war, and the shouts of the gathering clan echoed far among the hills. But no sounds of strife succeeded. Tidings that the Graham himself—so late and so unsuspectedly in their power—had wedded the heiress of Ardrona, and that his clan were assembling to defy them, met the Campbells on their way; and fearing to draw down their sovereign's wrath by so fierce and fatal a struggle as must have been their meeting, they retreated, leaving Lilius Graham to bless the lot which—heiress though she was, and in a time when maidens' hearts were but lightly regarded—had given to her love unmixed with darker passions, and seeking and winning her own as its only and best reward.

OUR CLIMATE.

"THAT'S me," as I have heard the hand-bill distributor of a cheap likeness-taking establishment observe, with better truth than grammar, to a few bystanders who were gazing in mute admiration of a full-length portrait of himself in a glass shade over his master's door. Yes, I am that unfortunate climate, that "horrid climate," that "unhealthy climate," that "changeable climate;" for by all these appellatives have I been designated by my own ungrateful children, whom I have reared under my care, smiled on with my sunshine, and wept over in my tears (too often as they say for their comfort), and whom it has been the object of my life to endeavour to propitiate.

A great political agitator (one of my sons, well known to all) once said that he was "the best abused man in the kingdom;" and I may, with equal veracity, assert that I am the best abused climate in the world. I catch it from all quarters; young and old, healthy and delicate, all vie with each other in my abuse, despite my vain effort to please them. No one, not even a prime minister, knows all I have to undergo in my attempts to satisfy everybody, or the disappointment I encounter in that respect. The farmer (always complaining) cries out for rain, for want of which, he says, his crops will be ruined; and to meet his wishes I condescend to be pluvious; but the first drop of my shower falls on the

new spring bonnet, armed with which a votary of fashion had just started for the promenade, intent on conquest; and she immediately raises her sweet voice in my abuse, totally regardless of the benefit to the said farmer's crops. The amateur skater, also dissatisfied with this style of weather, desires a good hard frost to enable him to enjoy his favourite recreation, and talks about this *miserable* climate never being anything decided, or like any other climate in the world. Well, down I come, with a good stiff frost; and while the skater is exulting in the change, a rheumatic old gentleman imprecates from beneath swathes of flannel at this "confounded climate," which he protests is only suitable to polar bears. My friend William Shakespeare speaks in his time of "the *winter* of our discontent;" but had he lived in the present day he would find the *complaint*, discontent of climate, extended to summer, spring, and autumn; during all which seasons it rages with unchecked violence.

Dissatisfaction follows all my movements. Every little failing I possess is held up to odium—

"All my faults observed,
Set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote,
To cast into my teeth."

My virtues are carefully kept in the background; and, as if to arouse my jealousy, every other climate, whether scorching, freezing, or pestilential, is held

up as an example to me, as disagreeable parents often taunt their unfortunate offspring for their benefit and annoyance by praising every other little boy of their acquaintance. Nothing I can do seems to receive general approbation. If, in the month of January, with the best possible intentions, I break out into a nice little bit of sunshine, there is a cry of complaint at the *unseasonableness* of my proceedings; and if chilled by this cold reception of my gratuitous good humour, I return to my accustomed mood at such seasons, and try a small measure of snow and frost, there is a snarl about chilblains and influenza from the gentlemen, and a most doleful repining from the ladies about my conduct being most *unbecoming*. If, again, in the spring-time, touched by the parched and beseeching looks of my sweet flowers and shrubs, I give vent to my feelings in a copious shower, I am saluted by a torrent of execrations, low, yet deep, from beneath a forest of discontented umbrellas. Here a sentimental young lady bemoans that she ever quitted "sweet sunny Italy" to sojourn in this "damp and unhealthy clime;" and then a would-be facetious young gentleman, punning atrociously at my expense, declares that this country, and not Germany, should be called "*Vaterland*." Another climate would be allowed to blow a little at times; and with his own people one would think a climate might take the liberty of being occasionally a little rough in his manner. A Frenchman, if *his* climate indulged itself in a hailstorm for a month, would, I have no doubt, with the courtesy and patriotism of his nation, still laud and eulogise his "*belle France*;" but if I were to be guilty of such an indiscretion, I should be greeted with no milder appellation than "*this detestable climate*." From one quarter of my dominions alone do I get anything like justice or fair play, and that is in Ireland, where I certainly take a good deal of freedom, and, I blush to say, occasionally give real cause for complaint. There a poor Paddy, when I have drenched his rags to his very skin, or tumbled him about in a hurricane, will bestow praises even on my infirmities, and good-humouredly remark to his neighbour, "A fine windy," or "a fine rainy day that, God bless it." But this generosity of sentiment, I must say, is solely confined to the lower orders, for among what are termed the upper classes, even in Ireland, I receive the same discourtesy as in England.

But what have I done to deserve all this? Look at other climates. Look at "sunny Italy." Did you ever find the malaria in London which periodically attacks the Italian metropolis? Oh! if I were to try that game for a little, what an outburst of invectives would fall upon me! Look at "*la belle France*." Are not its inhabitants stung almost to death in the rural districts by mosquitoes, while I am abused like a sweep if I allow the rubicund proboscis of an irritable old gentleman to be tickled by a midge in the shade of a summer evening, or a blue-bottle fly to commit suicide in an old lady's cream-ewer. Look at the golden East, too—take the East Indies, for instance, where the "*yellow Jack*" is as common as a cold in the head is here. How many fine young fellows who have deserted their native soil to seek their fortunes in that field of glory, are obliged, after a few years' residence there, to come back to *me* liverless—ay, to *me*, that horrid, uncertain, unwholesome climate—to *recruit* their health. Did you ever know me do anything in the yellow fever line—except that under which many of my children labour, the *gold* fever, and for which I am not answerable? No, never, on my honour, as a climate. Look at the opposite extreme—at Russia or Poland—where a man may discover his fine aquiline nose in his pocket-handkerchief of a morning, bitten off by the relentless frost of those frozen regions; and where, if a person indulge in an afternoon "*siesta*" on a journey, he will probably never awaken. Did you ever see me do such things? I am considered excessively rude if I ever give a roseate tinge to the nasal organ of a young lady; and, indeed, very often have to bear the blame for a natural peculiarity of that description in some of my people, of which I am totally innocent, but made on this, as on many occasions, the unhappy scapegoat. Look at the reptiles, too, produced in other climes; cobra-capellas as common as bull-frogs, and rattlesnakes as field-mice here. Pleasant fellows these snakes for a lady at a ball to mistake for a girdle!

What, then, have I done to deserve all this abuse which salutes me in every direction? Look at what I can produce; and here I indignantly challenge competition with any climate in the world. Look here at one of my offspring, a fine guardsman, six feet four in his stocking-soles, and make in proportion, a credit to his sovereign, and the delight of all the

servant girls in his vicinity. Look at his muscular frame, his clear colour and erect carriage. It is all my doing, every bit of it. *I* reared him under my special care. *I* pinched him when he was a little boy with my east winds; *I* drenched him with my April showers; and when he was very well behaved, *I* smiled on him with my sunbeams; but to teach him the uncertainty of life, and to inure him to its vicissitudes, *I* often blustered out at him with my storms, or pelted at him with my hail. What is the result? There you have him, a fine manly, noble fellow, prepared for every hardship, used to every climate (a little touch of each of which *I* have given him in his own), and ready to fight his country's battles, and to thrash half-a-dozen lean hungry-looking foreigners on the smallest provocation. Put him beside one of those miserable hairy specimens of humanity that foreign climates produce, such as we see lurking about Leicester-square or Regent-street. How many of them do you suppose he could "double up" in the course of an hour with fair play and no favour? Yet he is one of the denizens of this unhealthy clime; and *I* could produce as many more as would thrash all the inhabitants of sunny Italy, "la belle France," and "mein Vaterland" (excuse a little indignant exaggeration), before breakfast of a morning, and sit down undisturbed by the exploit to their morning's repast. I am angry, *I** admit it, and *I will* speak my mind, and tell you, Mr. British Public, that, as far as *I* am concerned, you are neither a generous public, nor (*I* will say it) an enlightened public. No enlightened

public could talk such stupid nonsense about every yellow-feverish, malarious, mosquito-biting, below-zero-ish climate, being better than his own fine, honest, strengthening climate (excuse this self-laudation, but you have driven me to it).

Oh! I wish I could see some of you in Russia in the winter season, or in Rome in the summer. But I know (for I have heard) that you go to these places to abuse them, and return to pay me the same compliment.

Public! I am a wronged, outraged, injured climate. I never deserved it from you. I feel hurt, and would be moved to tears, but that I know such an outburst of my feelings would only raise the cry of "Oh, this incessant rain!" and more invectives against your slighted, injured climate. But before we part, I would say one word of warning to you, growling malcontents, who are perpetually repining at the ways of Providence, and setting up the little circumstances of your own convenience and comforts as causes against such a system of dealing as *He* thinks, in His infinite wisdom, the best for your country. Beware! Climates have undergone great changes. Fevers and new diseases, earthquakes and whirlwinds, have made their unwelcome visits where they were least expected. Beware, lest I should receive orders to change my character some of these days, lest you should be forced, out of the disastrous wreck of the earth's convulsion, or the calamitous desolation of some hideous pestilence, to repent of the unprovoked murmurings and ceaseless discontent with which you ever greeted

YOUR CLIMATE.

A VISION OF CHRISTMAS.

ALONE, in a saloon that might own a royal master, with sheets of mirror and rich hangings, and furniture of costliest wood, and all the splendour and taste that ingenuity can produce and gold purchase, sits a man who might be old, to judge by his dejected air, but who is not. A profusion of dark silken hair curls and clusters round his brow, wild as the neglected trailing of the vine, taking fantastical shapes, reckless as the thoughts that burn beneath them. His eye is bright, but joyless; and his lip, curled into a keen habitual scorn, expresses a heart sick with experience of

life. What does he here alone, at such a time, when the four corners of the earth are preparing to rejoice? Should not sounds of music ring through this hall, and the stir of lordly company give it life, and the shining forms of rich dressed loveliness float through it? The bells will soon ring out the Christmas hour; and the feasting and merriment of to-morrow fill the world with expectation. But there is no to-morrow in his mind, nor thought of festivity. He and the world have parted and stand opposed, a bitter hatred flowing between them, broad and stormy. And

he sits alone, without a friend and without a smile.

Barren of affection though his heart is now, it was not always so. It swelled once with emotions full and ready. He had then an ear for sorrow, a response for generosity, and sympathy for joy. The mother who watched over his cradle and trained up his unfolding mind to good and noble thoughts, in the fond pride of her heart looked forward to a time when the rare gifts and more rare nature she knew him to possess, would lift him high above the crowd, to be an object of men's admiration—good, brave, enthusiastic, tender, generous, and gifted! And when her eyes closed on this world, it was a thought she cherished joyfully that the soft hand she joined to his, gave him a heart equal to his own in truth and goodness. In his mind he has drawn that picture often since; and if his lip ever relaxes from its curl of scorn and hatred for a moment, it is on such occasions. But the hate and scorn came back again, and the heart that loved once, curses.

He who runs gloriously in the race and in the twinkling of an eye is struck down, is this man's type. Life was fresh to him. He embraced it in confidence, and his faith was betrayed. Burning for fame, not of the common sort, but to be reputed true to friendship and to love, he had adopted his friend and won the woman of his choice. And as he loved them both, he willed that they should love too, because of the faith each bore to him. He had his wish, but he had more. Loving for his sake, they soon loved for each other's; and now the friend and the bride looked strange when he was by.

Coldly did she now respond to his wooing; and when he spoke sweetly to her, and put his arm fondly round her waist, or played with her long golden tresses, and told her she was the loveliest and best of lovely ones, why did she look abstractedly upon the ground, as if she heard not, and suffer her hand to be pressed without return, as if she felt not?

These were the first symptoms of decaying love, but Edgar did not comprehend them. Anon came tears, and his heart bled to see her weep, though he never dreamt the cause; nor why her cheeks grew pale and her eyes thoughtful. By their love he implored her to make him partner in her sorrow. But she only wept the more.

Time, which had taken wings and decked

itself with garlands, scarce touching the ground as it flew gaily onwards, now went with a heavy pace. What influence was it which wrought this change? In the bustle of the day, in the silent hours of the night, when he passed along the thoroughfares of life, or traversed the hill, or brooded in the solitude, Edgar's mind, intent on the solution of this mystery, was absorbed by it, and strained till it seemed no longer able to endure its agony of doubt. Nature smiled on him in vain. The lovely summer's eve lay in golden floods upon the meadow, and sparkled like myriad gems upon the river. The air was full of music; the grass chirped with joyous life, and the merry sound of children's voices from afar, like all things innocent, floated up to Heaven. Edgar sat down upon the bank and gazed on the flood rolling before him. The light faded; the last golden rays departed from the sky, and the quiet moonlight flowed over the scene. He rose and re-entered the wood which lay betwixt him and his home, and thoughtfully pursued his path. At a little distance from him he heard footsteps. Pausing, he looked round, and through a vista beheld his brother—alone!

How fond and generous a love was in his breast towards this young man. The moment he looked upon him he forgot his cares. He admired his tall and graceful form, proud and athletic, and his heart swelled as he reflected that for ten years he had been a father to the boy whom his love and care had trained up to this noble manhood. It was a glorious thought that when himself had only numbered twenty years he had taken his sire's place, and shown the wisdom of older age, inspired into his soul by its burning, enthusiastic love. There, at least, was satisfaction. If the woman's heart grew cold, there was the brother and the friend to fill her place with an affection that fortune could not change, and death alone could end.

More footsteps, and another form appears. The boy springs towards her, and their lips meet, his arms clasped round her, and her delicate form yielding to his rapturous embrace. While the man's eyes swim, and his head reels till he staggers for support against a tree—the lovers pass on with their stolen joy, twined by each other's arms, in the cold, chaste moonlight.

Love! No; that is past. Henceforth hate is the ruling passion of his soul. Wealth accumulates around him; flatterers would gather, if he would suffer them; honours are within reach—but they are

all spurned, scorned, trampled upon, with bitter, unrelenting, and contemptuous hate, till his eyes kindled with unearthly brightness, and his cheek grew lank and sallow, and the heart whose life was love, lived only for revenge.

Revenge came. The brother who had betrayed him was now his suppliant. Stricken down by poverty, homeless with his wife and child, mad with want, and crouching like a slave for mercy, while the other's steadfast eyes, turned slowly on him, gleamed with an exulting rage. Months, long as years, had passed; on this hope he had lived; and now, when the hour of triumph came, he laughed loud and bitterly, though the frosty wind howled round the mansion, and the snow fell in whirling clouds upon the ground, and the picture of their misery was before him. The grace of youth which he had cherished was gone—the proud bearing, the fearless mien. Hunger and nakedness had done their work, and the repulsed brother turned mournfully away with a broken heart. The mocking laugh could not stir his blood into anger, nor the scornful curling lip. Slowly his steps receded till he had reached the door.

“Edgar!”

Such a voice might have touched a heart of stone, such a look persuaded hatred itself to put off its bitterness; but it only moved him to a sterner enmity, and again he breathed a malediction upon both.

The bells chime merrily, like angel voices in the air, raising the triumphant “Gloria in Excelsis” over the new-born Babe of Bethlehem! The poorest home makes merry. The prisoner in his cell, the pauper in his ward, the labourer in his hovel—all feel the inspiration of the hour in which earth and Heaven seem to meet and to be reconciled. The drifting snow and the keen biting wind without matter not; the fire blazes cheerfully within, and every face smiles with joy and breaks into laughter. There are sounds of music, too. The “Adeste” peals from ten thousand organs, an exulting and enraptured strain, to which saints and angels listen as it swells up and mingles with their own rejoicing Hallelujahs! and the hearts of all are light. Whoever has a care flings it off, and prepares to drink deep of the gladness of the festival. The rich unlock their treasures, and the poor make holiday. The mother gathers her brood around her with their clamorous petitions—refusing, that they may urge the more, or delighting them with un-

expected pleasures. While the rattling dance goes off—feet light as the hearts that lift them; and whispers of love call up blushes on fair, innocent cheeks; and old and weary eyes sparkle bright and young again over the joyous scene.

Still, to commemorate the history of the night, there is the wanderer who has no home to rest in—perhaps, a mother and her children; exposed to the pitiless storm, hurrying with shrinking feet over the frosty ground; friendless and hungry, while the store-rooms of the rich are gorged with profusion, and every luxurious appliance invites them to their ease. But not less miserable than these is he who sits in the midst of splendour, heedless of what passes in other homes, noting not the progress of Time as it rolls onward to the hour of midnight, to add another to nigh two thousand commemorations of the glorious festival. The fire has no comfort for him; he almost envies the naked wretch who has no evil worse than hunger and cold to endure; who is not the sport of a mental fever which has dried up every source of sympathy in his nature; and suffers a malediction to pass his lips, invoking misery upon his mother's child.

He heard the first peal of the Christmas bells; but their sound recalled nothing happy to his mind. His Past had become like his Present, gloomy. Even the deep draught of revenge he had just quaffed failed to satisfy his soul. The feverish exultation of the moment died away, and the oppression and bitterness of his spirit came back to weigh upon himself. Oh, to shut out the world from his mind, as he had banished it from his affections. To create thoughts of his own, and live with them, speak to them, love them! To have something sure to rest upon—not the treachery of fortune or of man!—something that could never be ungrateful! Tossed by these restless and burning thoughts, he sought refuge in the open air. The scene was solitary as himself; the sound of the new-fallen snow, crumping under his feet, was all that broke its stillness; the chiming of the distant bells seeming to increase the silence in his immediate neighbourhood. The snow continued to fall fast, and the wind, which had considerably abated, sighed mournfully past him. In the fever of a distracted mind, he heeded nothing, but went on with rapid step, believing he should reach the town ere long. Presently he found himself beside a stile.

Where was he? He had been journeying further into the country, for in his right road this should not have been. He turned, and, as he believed, retraced his steps; but in a few minutes he was stopped by a hedge. Again he turned, and, after walking a little, found his feet descending. In another moment the thin layer of ice on which he had stepped broke, and he fell in. The water was shallow and he soon recovered his footing, but he was drenched, and in a few minutes felt his clothes begin to harden upon him, and his very heart seemed to be chilled. A shudder of agony passed through him when he reflected how common was the loss of life in storms like this. But he rallied and went on, his teeth chattering and his limbs trembling from the dreadful cold.

In vain. The further he went, the further he might go. No house appeared, no traveller crossed his path. Another hedge now intercepted him, and dropping with fatigue he was tempted to lie down, though with the terrible thought before him that to sleep was to die. Despair for a moment reanimated him, and with all his might he called for help. He listened, but no one answered him. He called again, but the only reply was the melancholy sighing of the wind. A heavy drowsiness came over him, and yielding to its influence he lay down on the snow and slept.

The bells have ceased to chime: and an old man and a woman pass before him. It is not the country now, but a village of olden time; and they go from house to house seeking for a lodging, weary and cold, for it is winter. As they ask, the inmates rudely close their doors upon them: and the feet that have travelled far, turn away in quest of a home which none seem willing to accord. With humble and grave aspect the patriarch leads the way, while the tender matron—purest and holiest of all Eve's daughters—follows him with eyes abashed, shrinking from the gaze of the passers-by, who look with contempt upon the poor and noteless strangers, till they seek shelter in the stable of an inn. Why are they outcasts? What law have they broken? Whose fame have they traduced? Who can say that they have done wrong? To whom have they been ungrateful? An innocent child looked up in the old man's face with reverence and awe, and from a glance of the matron's eyes, felt her soul filled with light. The tired labourer, as

he had passed them, paused awhile and wondered what influence was upon him, and how it came that the air seemed in a moment to stir with a gentle hovering as of wings, and with music which mocked the rivalry of human skill. But the world went by; the adorned Pharisee, the rich publican, the priests and learned doctors, with a scornful look on the poor carpenter and his spouse.

Now the air stirs indeed. The shepherds who stand upon the watch by night, near Bethlehem, to guard their flocks from danger, behold a beaming brightness in the heavens, and an angel descending, who tells them of the child lying in the manger. From an innumerable host of celestial spirits burst forth the "Gloria in Excelsis!"

Then come the shepherds and the king's magi of the east, who kneel down and adore and offer gifts. Then suddenly the child is caught up in His mother's arms, and flies by midnight into a distant land; returning to grow up in the midst of toil, to help His faithful guardian in his labours, to carry home His Virgin-mother's work to those who have bespoke it; to receive their money, or be repulsed by the insolent reproaches and contempt which poverty too often suffers at the hands of its employers. As the sacred picture passes before him, and he traces the developing tragedy, tears seem to start from his eyes and flow over his long arid soul; for he sees love without reward, enduring through hunger and privation and the black ingratitude of those it loves, surviving the most cruel persecutions and most ignominious death, but loving and forgiving to the last! He trembles; for what has he borne?—yet he has cursed.

Another picture is unrolled before him. Beautiful as he remembers her with his infant brother upon her neck, he beholds the mother over whose lifeless body they embraced. She passes slowly, her arms crossed upon her breast, and her face averted from his gaze. She has scarce gone, ere a dense darkness envelopes him, and he finds himself in a firm grasp, against which he wrestles, but in vain. Now a new sensation comes over him. He appears to be struggling up through a multitude of waters, slowly making way and in an agony to breathe. The monsters of the deep swarm around him, hideous as his own hatred, and vehemently retort his maledictions on himself, their fearful jaws opening to let out their

mocking laughter. Will he never come to the top ! Presently the waters begin to surge past his ears ; the monsters rage at him and lash about in fury ; he hears voices overhead, and in a minute more he breathes.

He lives !

Where is he ? A fire blazes before him. He is lying close to it upon the ground, and a man's hand chafes his breast. A woman with her child stand over him. The face is pale and worn, but he remembers it, and, closing his eyes, weeps.

In happier times Edgar had built a summer-house of some dimensions, and containing several rooms, on the verge of his estate. Here with Eleanor he had passed some of the happiest hours of his life. But from the moment he discovered her love for his brother, he visited it no more, but suffered it to fall into neglect. When, after the endurance of many privations, Edward had met his crowning misfortune in the interview with his brother, he carried his wife and child from the lodging from which they were about to be driven, and placed them in this house ; when, breaking up a shattered door, and availing himself of whatever else the house afforded in the shape of fuel, he soon kindled a blazing fire, before which he placed his friendless family. The spirit of the man now returned to him, and, resolving to compel the assistance which wronged affection refused, he again made his way to the mansion, and without announcement entered the saloon. His brother was not there. The old domestic in whose charge the mansion was, undertook to provide him food till his brother's anger might be soothed ; and, ere they ceased, the Christmas chimes brought the message of peace and good-will even to this poor outcast. Returning with the last load of comforts which his old nurse had bestowed upon him, he heard a cry for help, and

listening to catch the direction in which it came, heard it again. Storing what he carried in the summer-house, he went forth into the fields ; and after groping and exploring till his search seemed hopeless, he saw a man lying almost buried in the snow. Raising him in his arms, he bore him to his own place of refuge, and found that it was Edgar.

Great was his joy, when at last the blood came back to his brother's face, and his eyes opened. Leaving him for awhile in charge of Eleanor, he roused the servants of the mansion, and had a litter made to convey him to his chamber. On his return, with his own arms he lifted him upon it, when, turning round, he found himself held in Edgar's grasp.

"Come," said the rescued man. "Eleanor and her child—bring them."

And they went : and when the young wife saw her child nestling in the rich draperied chamber, and saw that the cloud of care had drifted from her husband's brow, she stooped her head over Edgar as he lay asleep and kissed him !

The spell was broken. The clouds which so long had settled upon his mind began to clear away, and from the bottom of his heart he sighed with the intense feeling of relief. Sympathies long ice-bound began to flow again, to stream freshly through his breast. The memory of days hateful hitherto, came back upon him, hateful no longer, though with an altered hue from what they wore in reality. And ruling all, renewing the love of life within him, seem to stand before him the poor wanderers of old and the Infant of the manger. Sweetly they smile upon him, while a voice whispers and tells him how true love is unselfish and undying.

Edward's hand is locked in his, pressed with a fond affection. He holds it till he falls asleep. No more clouds now, no anger, no hate. The Christmas music sounds gently in his ear, and the Star of Bethlehem rises on his soul.

A LEAF FROM MY JOURNAL IN MEXICO.

WHEN I was in Mexico, some years ago, I was engaged in a rather troublesome affair; namely, the recovery of a considerable sum of money from a debtor of whose whereabouts not the slightest trace could be found. Speed and energy being, in this matter, of essential importance, I had addressed myself, in consequence, to several gentlemen of the long robe, who possessed reputations for never interfering in difficult cases in vain. All had commenced by promising me their assistance; but as soon as I had named the mysterious debtor,—who rejoiced in the title of Don Dionisio Peralta,—one and all had drawn back, opposing to my entreaties the most absurd and ridiculous excuses. This one assured me that he would never forgive himself for causing the slightest annoyance to so gallant a caballero as Senor Peralta; that one was attached to the gentleman in question by a *compadrazgo*, or companionship of long standing; while a third, with the most pitiful countenance in the world, brought forward as an objection the reminiscences of a boyish friendship. Finally, a fourth, more frank than the rest, hinted broadly that, independent of all these friendly scruples, there was the fear of a stab in the back some dark night; a proceeding which Senor Peralta had, to all appearances, more than once put in practice, in order to relieve himself of a creditor whose attentions had been too pressing. "The only man I know that can assist you," added he, "is the licentiate, Don Tadeo Cristobal; he has a hand of iron, joined to a lion's heart; in short, he is just the man for you." No sooner had I received this piece of intelligence when I hastened to the *Calle de los Batanes*, where dwelt, as they told me, the licentiate Don Tadeo; but there a fresh disappointment awaited me. Don Tadeo had quitted his lodgings, and no one could or would tell me where he had now set up his tabernacle.

Thoroughly wearied and discouraged at the close of a hot summer's day, the whole of which had been spent in fruitless researches, I was promenading sadly enough under the *Portales de los Mercaderes*, or Merchants' Arcades. I had resolved, as a last chance, to seek some information concerning Don Tadeo from the numerous public writers whose stalls, situated under these galleries, may be considered in the

light of so many offices of intelligence, open at all hours to the curious inquirer. But, once fairly under the Arcade, I had completely forgotten the motive which had led me to this species of bazaar, the daily rendezvous of all the idlers in Mexico, and my entire attention was absorbed by the animated picture now spread before my eyes. The reader would, I have no doubt, be less astonished at this distraction of thought, were he to picture to himself the magical aspect of the Plaza Mayor of Mexico an hour before sunset. The *Portales de los Mercaderes* occupy, in fact, one side of this immense square, the three remaining faces of which are taken up by the cathedral, the *Ayuntamiento*, and the presidential palace. The two finest streets in Mexico open into the square between these edifices; these are the Rua de la Primera Monterilla, with its beautiful shops, and the Rua de los Plateros, almost exclusively occupied by silversmiths and jewellers; then, facing these streets, wherein European commerce displays all its marvels, the petty commerce of Mexico seems to have chosen for the theatre of its operations the sombre arcades of the Mercaderes. At the epoch of my sojourn in the country, no innovating hand had as yet changed the picturesque physiognomy of these arcades. The heavy vaulted arches were supported on one side by the large gloomy-looking stores of the dealers, and on the other by massive pillars, around the bases of which were laid out a succession of *alacenas*, or stalls, abundantly provided with prayer-books, rosaries, daggers, and spurs. By the side of these stalls, as if to represent trade reduced to its very lowest denomination, stood a few ragged *leperos*, who trafficked in glass beads, rings, and trinkets, and who, with their stock-in-trade ingeniously suspended from one finger, pursued their customers with most importunate solicitations. From time to time the dealers in cooked wild-fowl, or *tamales*,* grouped together under the shadow of the arches, mingled with the general hum of the crowd their well-known cry, "*Aqui hay pato grande, mi alma; senorito venga sted!*"† or the

* Highly seasoned viands, flavoured with pimento, &c., and cooked in a maize leaf.

† "I have good ducks, my soul; come, my young senor."

briefer, and no less popular one, of "Tamales queretanos." The passengers and customers were quite as worthy of observation as the dealers. The brilliant colours of the dresses and *tapalos*, the gold of the *mangas*, the medley of tints in the striped *sarapes*, viewed in the dim light which penetrated beneath the pillars, formed altogether a scene worthy of a Venetian carnival masquerade. It was above all in the evening that the throng beneath the arcades of the Mercaderes offered a brilliant spectacle. In the evening, shops and stalls are alike closed, and the Portales become a political club. Seated upon the threshold of their carefully-secured doors, or gravely pacing this species of cloistered avenue, officers and civilians may be seen conversing together of revolutions past, present, or to come, until the hour arrives when the now almost deserted galleries serve but as a meeting-place for lovers and their fair ones, while their dim and silent vaults echo but to the murmur of the love tale whispered by some Mexican youth into the ear of his *inamorata*.

I had wandered for some time under the Portales, when the appearance of a public writer's stall suddenly recalled to my mind the object of my visit. Among the traders of the Portales the public writers form a considerable corporation. It must be recollected that in Mexico, elementary instruction being to this day very generally neglected, the functions of the public writers have, amid this illiterate population, lost nothing of their original importance. The docile pen of the "Evangelist"—for such is the title that he rejoices in—is required for a thousand different purposes, more or less delicate, and some of them, it must be said, equivocal enough, from the emptiest of empty love letters, to the mysterious note despatched by the hired bravo to lure his victim into some fatal ambush. The evangelist whom I had especially singled out from among his numerous fellow-labourers, was a little, thin, wrinkled old man, around whose nearly bald crown straggled a few grizly locks of hair. What had originally attracted my attention to him was the peculiar expression of sardonic joviality which animated his countenance, in other respects insignificant enough. I was about to accost this man, in order to make some inquiries of him respecting the whereabouts of Don Tadeo, when an incident occurred which constrained me to resume my original part of

taciturn observer. A young girl had approached the stall of the evangelist. The long plaited hair which escaped in tresses from beneath her half-open *rebozo*; her sun-burnt complexion; her brown shoulders, which the chemise of fine linen, bordered with lace, left almost bare; her slender waist, which no corset had ever deformed by compression; and, above all, the three petticoats of strongly contrasting colours, which fell in straight folds over her hips, all betrayed in the young client of the evangelist the purest type of the Mexican *china*.*

"Tio Luquillas!" said the young girl.
"What is it?" replied the evangelist.
"I want you."

"So I should imagine, since you called me," rejoined Tio Luquillas; and, fancying that he had guessed the nature of the message which the maiden was about to dictate to him, he unfolded, with great complaisance, a sheet of highly-glazed rose-coloured parchment, upon which was depicted a pair of fat cupids, apparently going through some extraordinary gymnastic performances; but the young *china* waived her little brown hand with a gesture of impatience.

"What use can a condemned man make of your rose-coloured paper?" said she.

"Ah, diabolo!" said the writer, without showing the slightest sign of emotion, whilst the maiden passed one of the long plaited tresses of her hair over her eyes.
"So they are adicus, eh?"

A sob was the *china*'s only reply; then, leaning over towards the ear of the old scribe, she endeavoured to dictate to him a short letter; not, however, without frequently pausing to take breath, and give free course to her tears. Never had the contrast of cold-blooded old age and passionate youth appeared to me so moving. Nor was I the only one to remark it, for there was scarce a promenader who passed the stall of Tio Luquillas who did not cast on the pretty *china* a glance of mingled curiosity and commiseration. The evangelist had folded the letter, which now only required the address, when a passer-by, either more bold or more curious than the rest, advancing suddenly to the stall, interrupted the colloquy between Tio and the *china*. The features of the new comer were not altogether unfamiliar to me, and I remembered that, having been placed beside me at a recent bull-fight, he had commented in the most attractive manner

* The *china* is the *grisette* of Mexico.

possible, and with the air of a true amateur, on the merits and defects of the exhibition of which we were spectators. The present moment not being a very favourable one for me to question in my turn the evangelist, I waited patiently at a short distance from the group, until the new comer should have taken his departure. This individual with whom I had had but a few hours' conversation in the circus, inspired me with a sort of interest I in vain endeavoured to account for. He was about forty years of age; his features might be called almost noble, despite a cloud of sombre irony which would occasionally flit over them, imparting in its course an expression almost sardonic. Independent of the recollection of our first interview, the strangeness of his costume would have alone been sufficient to recall him to my memory; this consisted in an ample blue mantle, lined with red, and, for a head-dress, a vast *sombrero* of drab felt, bound with broad gold lace.

"For whom is this letter, my child?" demanded he of the *china*, with a certain air of authority.

The maiden pointed with her finger towards the presidential palace, and murmured a name which did not reach my ears.

"Ah! it's for Pepito, is it?" exclaimed the stranger aloud.

"Alas! yes; and I know not how to get it sent to him."

"Well, well, don't fret about it; we'll devise some means or other. And, stay; as I live, here is an occasion sent expressly for us."

At this moment there was a general rush of the crowd towards the Plaza Mayor. A circumstance of but too frequent occurrence in Mexico, namely, an assassination, had been committed in the public street. The murderer had been seized, his victim raised from the ground, and the *cortége* was now on its way to the nearest prison. This prison was precisely the one in which the young *china*'s lover was incarcerated, and I was accordingly at no loss to discover the sense of the words of hope which had been addressed to her by the stranger.

The procession, which was now defiling along the square, possessed, in its half ludicrous, half serious aspect, an originality thoroughly local. A *cargador*, or street porter, marched at the head, bearing upon his shoulders, by the aid of a leather strap passed round the forehead

—as is the custom of the Mexican porters—a chair, upon which was fastened a man, or rather a dead body, over which had been hastily thrown a bloody coverlid. The assassin, in the custody of four soldiers, followed close after his victim; a few idlers, and some of the friends of the deceased, brought up the rear. Of all these men, each more or less moved or occupied, the most tranquil, beyond all question, was the murderer, who, with the most marvellous non-chalance, strode quietly on between his guards, a cigarito sticking out of one corner of his mouth, from time to time addressing to his victim certain reproaches, which, to his evident surprise, remained unanswered.

"Come, none of your nonsense, Master Panchito," said he; "you know right well that I have not the means of making your wife an allowance. You think yourself a very cunning fellow to feign death in that sort of way; but for all that I'm not your dupe."

But, despite all the assassin said to the contrary, poor Panchito was really and truly dead; and I could not control a shudder when I gazed on the hideous corpse as it was borne close by me, with the bright sun shining on its eyes, which were wide open and fixed in a horrid unearthly stare. The stranger in the *sombrero* was doubtless more accustomed to such sights than I was, for, going straight up to the procession, he stopped it, and placed the *china*'s letter in the murderer's hands.

"Listen to me," said he. "You are, of course, acquainted with the illustrious Pepito Rechifla?"

"What! he that is to be strangled tomorrow? of course I am; he is my companion."

"Well, as his turn is sure to come first, you will see him by and bye in the prison. Give him this letter for me."

"Ah, Señor Caballero!" interrupted the young Mexican girl, who, with heaving bosom and eyes bathed in tears, had flung herself at the murderer's feet and seized, in the antique manner, the hem of his garment, "for the sake of the blessed Virgin, do not forget to give him this letter. I am so unhappy at not being able to see him,"

"Yes, *Linda mia*, yes," replied the assassin, placing his hand over his eyes, and endeavouring to impart a pathetic tone to his voice; "I have a very soft heart also; and had it not been for this

damned Panchito, who was always vexing and annoying me, I should not be here, I can assure you; however, *preciosita de mi alma!*"

A piece of money, flung by the man in the sombrero to the prisoner, cut short this elegant tirade, and, the soldiers resuming their march, the little procession quickly disappeared round an angle of the *ayuntamiento*. A few women of the lower orders, with the delicate sensibility of the Mexicans, now gathered around the young *china*, and endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade her to return home. Resisting all entreaties, I saw her proceed towards the prison, and seat herself at the foot of the wall, her features veiled in the ample folds of the *rebozo*.

The stranger in the sombrero had disappeared in the crowd, and, as the moment was now favourable for me to consult the evangelist, I tapped lightly on the old man's shoulder.

"Can you inform me," inquired I, "where dwells the licentiate, Don Tadeo Cristobal?"

"Don Tadeo Cristobal, did you say? Why, he was here not two minutes ago."

"Here! Don Tadeo!"

"Did you not see how kindly he undertook to have that letter delivered to the bandit, Pepito Rechifla, which had been dictated to me by one of the prettiest *chinas* in Mexico?"

"What! the man in the sombrero and red-lined mantle was Don Tadeo, the licentiate?"

"Himself."

"And where, think you, shall I be able to find him now?"

"That is a question, Señor, that I can hardly answer. Properly speaking, he has no dwelling-place; he lives a little everywhere, as one might say. If, however, you have got anything particular to say to him, go this evening, between nine and twelve o'clock, to the *Callejon del Arco*; you will be sure to find him in the last house on the right-hand side, as you enter from the Plaza."

I thanked the writer, and, having left him a few reals in testimony of my gratitude, directed my steps towards the *Callejon del Arco*. Although it was scarcely seven o'clock, I thought it would be well, before night-fall, to reconnoitre the house I purposed visiting a couple of hours later. Experience had taught me that similar precautions were not to be despised in Mexico, and more especially in this instance, as the *Callejon*

del Arco had been pointed out to me as one of the most disreputable alleys in the capital.

The appearance of this lane but two well justified the reputation it had acquired. The mass of buildings of which the "Portales de los Mercaderes" forms a portion, and which is known by the name of the *Impedradillo*, does not form a perfect solid square. In front of the cathedral, which faces the south-west, there opens in the *Impedradillo* a narrow lane, the entrance of which bears no ill resemblance to the mouth of one of those caverns formed by the action of the sea in the perpendicular face of a sandy cliff. This is the *Callejon del Arco*. When dazzled by the vivid sunbeams with which the Plaza Mayor is inundated, and which, reflected from the white faces of the buildings and the granite of the footway, has an almost blinding effect, you penetrate into this narrow and tortuous alley, the eye, before it has got accustomed to the obscurity, can, after a few moments, but just distinguish another street, which bisects this one at right angles, the junction point forming a small dark space. There, as in the sea-side caverns, you hear scarce a sound from without, save a low, confused murmur, which as much resembles the distant breaking of the agitated waves as it does the far-off tumult of a populous city. A few rope-makers' stores, some massive and hermetically closed portals, here and there a half-open cellar, alone remind you that you are in the vast metropolis of Mexico, teeming with life and movement. The walls drip with perpetual moisture, and it is only at noon, and that too but for a short period in the middle of summer, that a furtive sunbeam enlivens for a moment the sombre pavement of the *Callejon del Arco*. Then a little fresh life is infused into this dismal lane, until the moment when, the sun regaining the opposite tropic, all sinks once more into darkness and silence.

It was, then, in this spot, and in one of these most disreputable looking houses, that I was to meet the man who, as everybody had assured me, could alone unravel an affair before which all the lawyers in Mexico had recoiled in dismay. I paused for a few moments to contemplate with surprise the spot so singularly chosen for a lawyer's place of business; but then, had not the little episode, of which I was a witness, in itself sufficiently prepared me for the eccentricities of Don

Tadeo? How was the tone of easy familiarity with which he addressed the wretch whom he had commissioned before my eyes with the message to Pepito Rechisla, to be explained? How, also, the acquaintanceship which evidently existed between this last-named bandit and the licentiate? This strange intimacy of a lawyer with thieves and murderers appeared to me, at first sight, of rather bad augury; the prospect, however, of at length obtaining a settlement of my affair finally decided my wavering purpose, and I quitted the *Callejon del Arco* with the full determination of returning two hours later.

The night had now come; it was one of those beautiful nights of May when the moon, the voluptuous splendour of which is unknown to the inhabitants of our cloudy mist-land, imparts to Mexico an aspect truly magical. Its soft beams now fell from a cloudless sky upon the pointed steeples of the churches and the coloured façades of the various public buildings, lighting them up in a thousand different manners. On the Plaza Mayor the crowd was no longer so dense as it had been before sunset; it was also calmer and more contemplative. The promenaders almost whispered their observations, as though fearful of disturbing the serenity of this most lovely night. The gentle sounds of waving fans and rustling silks, and now and then a little burst of feminine laughter, as pure and melodious as the vibrations of a musical glass, joined with the occasional tinkle of a far-off convent bell, alone disturbed the silence of the evening. The women, with their long veils, the men enveloped in the wide folds of their Spanish cloaks, glided along like shadows over the Plaza. Here might be discovered, but ill disguised beneath the ample folds of the national costume, more than one couple whose presence on such a spot, and at such an hour, would have fully confirmed the scandalous gossip of the *salons*. Mingled with this concourse of young and pretty women were also a few of those whom we style on the shady side of thirty, and not a few of the fair, but frail, *doucellas chanfonas*, of whom Perez de Guevara makes honourable mention. I say nothing of the hosts of adventurers with which Mexico literally swarms; delicious fellows these, true types of Matamores, swaggering along, with their sabres and spurs jingling noisily upon the pavement. Such was the aspect of the Plaza

Mayor at the hour when, slowly, and, I must confess, rather irresolutely, I threaded its gay and motley throng on my way to the *Callejon del Arco*.

At the very first step which I took in this dismal lane, a current of cold air, like that which escapes from the ventilator of a cellar, struck me in the face, and chilled me to the bone. For some minutes I stood motionless at the entrance of the lane, seeking to distinguish some traces of light at the windows or grated doors of the houses; but all was as dark as pitch. I accordingly made up my mind for the worst, and advanced, almost feeling my way as I proceeded, in the direction of the house which I had noted at sunset. I had nearly reached the open space formed by the intersection of the street, of which I have already made mention, when the sound of footsteps advancing rapidly behind me suddenly reached my ears, and, looking back, I could just discern the figure of a man coming, as I had done, from the Plaza. I drew up to the wall to let him pass, but, in so doing, the long rapier worn by this nocturnal rambler somehow or other got entangled between my legs; I stumbled forward, and, to avoid a fall, which would otherwise have been inevitable, grasped hold of his cloak. The man stepped quickly aside, and the sudden rasping sound of the steel warned me that he had drawn his aword.

"Capo di Dios!" shouted he; "is it my person or my cloak that you want, Senor thief?"

I fancied that I recognised this voice, and so hastened to reply,—

"I am neither a thief nor an assassin, Senor Don—Don—"

I had hoped that the stranger would have come to the assistance of my memory, and have mentioned his name, but in this I was disappointed, for he did nothing of the kind, but, leaning his back against the door of a neighbouring house, demanded roughly who I was and what I wanted with him.

"I seek the dwelling of the licentiate Don Tadeo Cristobal," replied I; and, if I am not mistaken, this is the very house before which we are now standing."

"Ah! and who told you of this house, may I ask?"

"Tio Luquillas, the evangelist. I wish to consult Don Tadeo on an affair of importance."

"Well, it is to Don Tadeo himself that you are now speaking."

The costume of this individual, whose features were indistinguishable in the gloom, was, in fact, the same as that worn some few hours previously by my friend in the sombrero, whose real name Tio Luquillas had given me. I hastened to reply to Don Tadeo, felicitating myself on this lucky rencontre, and demanding a few moments' conversation with him in private.

"Most willingly," replied he; "I am quite prepared to enter with you upon your business; but, first of all, let us get into this house,—we shall be able to converse more at our ease." And, as he spoke, he knocked with the hilt of his rapier upon the door against which he had been leaning. "My profession," added he, "obliges me adopt some precautions; you will comprehend by and by wherefore. Do not be astonished at my singular domicile; they must have told you that I was an original, and they are right, too."

As he spoke, a loud noise of bolts and chains undoing informed us that we were about to be admitted, and immediately afterwards the heavy door swung slowly back upon its hinges. The porter, who carried a lantern in his hand, bowed respectfully to the licentiate, who made a sign to me to follow him. Crossing rapidly the *zaguán*, or vestibule, we climbed a steep wooden staircase, and finally stopped before a green baize door surmounted by a transparency, upon which might be read the following words in letters of most gigantic proportions:—
SOCIETAD FILARMONICA.

A confused medley of discordant shouts and cries reached our ears from the saloon dignified with this ambitious title.

"Are these your clients who are kicking up such a row inside there, Senor Licentiate?" demanded I of Don Tadeo. Without replying, he pushed open the door, and we found ourselves in a vast and dimly-lighted room. A long table, covered with green cloth, and surrounded with players, occupied the centre of the apartment; in addition to lights in sconces fastened round the wall, four wax-candles as tall as those used in the Mexican churches, and contained in tin tubes, completed the illumination of the saloon. A few small tables, ranged at equal distances along the side of the room, served for those who might desire refreshments; such as infusions of tamarinds and rose water, or Barcelona brandy. Finally, at the further end of the room, there arose

a species of high dais, ornamented with rough fresco delineations of bassoons, horns, clarionets, &c. &c., doubtless for the purpose of recalling to the minds of the frequenters the original destination of the establishment.

The reader may imagine my feelings of surprise on first putting foot into such a den as this at the moment when I imagined I was going to be introduced into a lawyer's office. With some feelings of distrust I glanced at my companion; it was indeed the man that I had met at the circus, and under the "Portales de los Mercaderes." With his strange costume, his long rapier, and his thick dishevelled hair, Don Tadeo had, it must be confessed, much more the air of a brigand than of a sober jurist. Scarcely had he taken three steps in the room when he was accosted by two individuals, who seemed, by their appearance, the fitting representatives of the cavern they frequented.

"How goes the illustrious Senor Don Tadeo to-night?" exclaimed the first, a species of giant, extending as he spoke, with an air at once ferocious and awkward, a fist of about the size and shape of a leg of mutton.

"Better than those whom you have a grudge against, Master Pearce," replied the licentiate, fixing upon his interlocutor as he spoke a glance as cold and piercing as the blade of his rapier. "Do you know," he continued, "that your reputation is made now in Mexico as well as in Texas, above all since—"

"Hush!" returned the American, quickly, evidently but little desirous of hearing the completion of the licentiate's phrase. "With your permission, I wish to consult you."

"Just now," replied the man of law, "I must give the preference to this caballero, whom I met before you."

"For mercy sake, hear me first, Senor Licentiate," interrupted a grey-headed individual, who wore the Mexican costume, and who squinted horribly.

"Ah! is that you, Navaja?" replied Don Tadeo, coolly surveying the Mexican, who evidently quailed beneath his eye. "Is it still a question of that bad affair?"

"Hush!" cried the Mexican, in his turn; "since it is your good pleasure, Senor, I will take the third place."

It had merely sufficed for Don Tadeo to make allusion to two episodes, neither of them probably redounding much to the

credit of the individual in question, to be quickly rid of their importunities. I could not help admiring the power possessed by my companion; a power evidently acquired at the price of an intimate and perilous commerce with the most lawless heroes of Mexican vagabond life.

"And now, Senor Caballero," said the licentiate, turning to me, "may I have the honour of knowing who you are, and what affair it is that has induced you to consult me? It must be a delicate matter, for none have recourse to my intervention but to resolve difficulties which my fellow-labourers consider insurmountable. It is, I have no doubt, one of these worthy legists who has advised you to address yourself to me."

I named the licentiate who had vaunted the intrepid heart and well-tried sword of Don Tadeo Cristobal.

The latter shook his head with a disdainful smile.

"It is a dangerous affair, I can see," he rejoined. "The man you have named is my declared enemy, and he never sends me any other jobs but these. I have a strange line of business, it must be confessed; and for that reason I may be excused for my promptness in unsheathing my rapier in the public streets at night. But, what would you have? I am from Seville, and have not passed some years of my life for nothing among the bullies of the suburbs of Triana.

"You are a Spaniard?"

"Undoubtedly I am, and before adopting the legal profession I was what they called an *uracan y calavera*.* You see in me, Senor, a student of Salamanca, that beautiful city, in which some years ago some choice spirit composed this rhyme:—

"En Salamanca la tuna
Auduve marzo y abril;
Ninas ho visto mas de mil
Pero comotu ninguna."†

"And I, too, Senor, have made quatrains in this joyous city as well as the rest, ay, and sung them too; and it was in consequence of a serenade, interrupted, unhappily, by a duel, which was followed by the death of a man, that I was compelled to seek my fortune in New Spain.

* Literally, "hurricane gentleman," a phrase which may be almost rendered by our slang term, "out and outer."

† "In Salamanca I have led a joyous life in the months of March and April. Of young maidens I have seen more than a thousand, but not one equal to thee."

To ensure success here, I possessed in an eminent degree two precious qualities which are rarely allied; namely, jurisprudence, and the art of fencing. And you yourself must have seen just now that I have not altogether lost my old *uracan* humour. Upon my life, Senor, it is a most fortunate thing that I did not put my sword through your body; but, to obtain my pardon for the rough greeting I gave you, permit me to offer you an infusion of tamarinds, or a glass of Catalonian *refino*."

And, without giving me time to put in a word, he drew me towards one of the side-tables, at which we seated ourselves. My astonishment increased in measure as I improved my acquaintance with this singular personage. It was not until after we had been served that Don Tadeo would consent to hear an explanation of my affair, which I gave him as briefly and clearly as possible.

"Very good," said he. "It concerns a debtor that you have not been able to find: but you know at least his name?"

"That is the point," said I; "for it is a name which somehow or other affected your colleagues with very lively feelings of sympathy; for, after hearing it, not one has dared to take the matter in hand."

"Let's hear the terrible name. I am curious to learn if it will produce the same effect upon me."

"I will whisper it to you," replied I. "My debtor is named Don Dionisio Peralta."

The countenance of the licentiate did not change.

"And how much does he owe you?"

"Fourteen hundred piastres."

"Stay," said Don Tadeo, after a moment's reflection, "we will ascend just now to the terrace on the top of this house, where we shall be able to talk over this matter more at leisure. But, in the first place, permit me to despatch these two worthies, who are waiting for their turn. The interest of your affair, besides, demands that I should not resume my consultation with you until I have collected some positive information of an indispensable nature from the frequenters of this house. All that I require of you is, that you do not manifest the slightest surprise in case you should hear things you do not exactly comprehend."

I pressed the hand of the licentiate, and we arose and approached the group of players, which had considerably increased in number since our entrance. A

double row of anxious spectators surrounded the green cloth, upon which the piastres rolled with a very enticing sound. The licentiate passed his two clients, the Mexican and the American, making a sign to them to wait for him, and walked up to a young man, who, standing amongst the spectators, kept his eyes ardently fixed upon the play-table. This youth, whose countenance was of a pale and sickly yellow, wore upon his long and sleek hair a little and almost brimless hat, and over his shoulder a threadbare *esclavine*, or short mantle. He looked the very picture of a solicitor's clerk, regretting his inability to risk his employer's entire fortune on the hazard of a card.

"Ortiz," said the licentiate, tapping him lightly on the shoulder, "have you got any writing materials with you?"

"Certainly," replied the clerk, drawing from his pocket a rouleau containing paper, pens, and ink. The licentiate seated himself apart from the throng, wrote hastily a few lines, folded the paper, and handed it to his clerk; who, having replied to the whispered instructions of his master by a low inclination of the head, instantly quitted the room.

This done, the licentiate begged me to have patience for a few moments longer, until he should have given his two clients their promised consultation, and I accordingly mingled with the crowd which pressed eagerly round the magic board. And, certainly, a more curious spectacle it has seldom been my lot to witness than this reunion of adventurers of all species and of every clime; where the strangest types of the old Spanish romances seemed on this occasion to have met together with one consent. One highly characteristic detail above all struck me as remarkable: in front of the banker lay a long Catalan knife, as bright, keen, and sharp as a razor. A charitable warning which he gave to the players soon explained to me the use to which this knife was destined. "I warn all the gentlemen here present," said he, "that if one of them attempts to confound his loose cash with the bank, I'll nail his hand without mercy to the table." As this strange threat appeared neither to astonish nor offend any one, I accordingly concluded that the case foreseen by the banker must have presented itself more than once. Despite, however, the strangeness of the scenes of which I was now a spectator, I had begun to get wearied of the quick and regular exchange of money which was passing before me, the mono-

tonous sounds of which were varied only by the voice of the banker, and an occasional interjection or oath from one of the players, when my meditations in front of the green cloth were put to flight by the return of the licentiate, who led me to a table placed at the further end of the room, at which his two clients—the squinting Mexican and the gigantic Yankee—were most fraternally seated. The American was swigging away at a bottle of Catalonian *refino*, while his companion was engaged in the discussion of a glass of iced tamarind water, which he was imbibing in little sips.

"Well, *Señor*," said the licentiate to me, with an expressive glance, "here are two caballeros who will remove all your scruples of conscience on the subject of the fourteen hundred piastres you owe me; and who are ready to affirm that you can pay them in all tranquillity of mind by the cession to me of the sum in which Don Dionisio Peralta is your debtor. *Señor Peralta* will honour his signature with the best grace in the world."

"I didn't say that," exclaimed the Yankee, with a loud horse-laugh; "I don't know if he will pay with a good grace; all I know is, he shall pay, or else—"

"Gently, gently," interrupted Don Tadeo; "from the moment that Peralta becomes my debtor his life is precious to me, and I must insist upon it being respected."

"*Señor Peralta* will pay with the best grace in the world, I'll answer for it," said the Mexican, sipping his infusion of tamarinds as if it had been fire-water.

"Let him pay, that is all I require," rejoined the licentiate; "but is not that Pepito Rechifla I see yonder with my clerk? Come, Ortiz has well fulfilled his commission."

The name of Pepito recalled to my mind the pretty *china* whom I had seen in such despair under the Portales de los Mercaderes. As for the gentleman who rejoiced in the name, he was one of those dark-complexioned, long-haired, free-and-easy-going worthies only to be met with under the tent of the wandering Bohemian, or in the streets of Mexico. As soon as Pepito caught sight of the licentiate, he ran towards him, and pressed his hand with every demonstration of the most profound gratitude. "Ah! *Señor Licentiate*," said he, "I shall never forget that it is to you I owe my life; I was condemned to be strangled the day after to-

morrow, and it is you who have saved me from the claws of the *Juez de Letras*; it is thanks to some reals from your purse that I have been restored to liberty. Yes, Señor Licentiate, do not feign astonishment; I know that it is you who are my saviour; your clerk, Ortiz, told me so."

"Ortiz is a blockhead," replied Don Tadeo, dryly; "but I rejoice no less at your good fortune, for I shall want to speak to you to-morrow morning, and I count upon your punctuality. In the meanwhile here is a piastre for your supper."

"For my supper! That's good, faith," replied the brigand. "I am never hungry but when I have nothing in my pocket. When I have a piastre I play it."

So saying, the illustrious Pepito swaggered off to the gaming-table. The Yankee and the Mexican rose at the same time and followed him. Don Tadeo, freed from his importunate clients, drew me aside.

"You see those three fellows," said he; "think you that there are many debtors who could long resist such bailiffs; above all, when it touches a debt ceded to the licentiate, Don Tadeo? You doubtless understood me when I dwelt strongly on the cession in your presence; my name is one arm more to employ in this perilous war; but, the war once over, the benefits thereby derived will be for you, less the expenses of the campaign, which you will permit me to deduct therefrom, along with the honours of the victory."

"But how are you to get hold of this Peralta?" inquired I. "Up to the present moment I have never been able to obtain the slightest clue to his whereabouts."

"That will be my business, and the business of those three worthies yonder, to whom I had the honour to introduce you this evening. Don Dionisio Peralta is a bad paymaster, but a first-rate swordsman. However, we shall see."

I now recalled to Don Tadeo's recollection that he had appeared desirous of conversing more at length on the subject of my affair, and I accordingly offered to satisfy his curiosity on this point. In reality, I sought but an occasion of improving my acquaintance with this singular personage. Don Tadeo seemed to divine my secret intention.

"It is now half-past ten," said he, looking at his watch: "I am at your orders, Señor, until midnight. Let us ascend to the *azotea*, which at this hour is deserted. The night is fine, and we can converse there at our ease."

On gaining the terrace, we both of us

involuntarily paused for a few moments in silent contemplation of the majestic scene which lay outspread beneath us. At our feet lay the ancient city of the Aztecs, with its innumerable domes, cupolas, and steeples, capriciously but most brilliantly lighted up by the rays of the moon. Near us, the cathedral projected over the immense Plaza Mayor its double and gigantic shadow. Further off, the Parial reared aloft its black mass amid the spaces whitened by the nocturnal lights, like a dusky shoal amid the breaking waves of the ocean. Still further off might be recognised the elegant cupola of Santa Theresa, the fine domes of the convent of San Francisco, the steeples of St. Augustine and of the Bernardines; and behind this majestic accumulation of pinnacles, cupolas, and pointed steeples, the distant country might be faintly descried through the white vapours which, ascending from the lakes towards the sky, hung around the city like a luminous curtain of silvery gauze.

Don Tadeo was the first to break silence by addressing to me some questions relative to my legal affair, which he had undertaken to bring to a favourable conclusion. I hastened to reply to his interrogatories, promising myself to lead him on soon to give me some revelations respecting his own previous career, which could not fail of being curious; but the licentiate had fallen into a deep reverie, and I had begun to despair of drawing him from his reserve, when the strangest chance came to my assistance; it was nothing more than the tolling of a far-distant bell, which arose suddenly like a wail amid the profound silence of the night. On hearing the bell, Don Tadeo shook his head, turned deadly pale, and, finally, hid his face in his hands. At length, with a sudden effort, he roused himself, and, grasping my arm, exclaimed, "Do you not hear that bell?"

"To be sure I do," replied I; "and if I am not mistaken, it is the passing-bell which they are ringing at the convent of the Bernardines."

"At the convent of the Bernardines!" repeated the licentiate in a strangely altered tone of voice; "at the convent of the Bernardines, do you say?"

"I should imagine so by the direction," replied I.

"Well, well, let us descend; this sound makes me ill."

"Why return so soon? do you not prefer breathing the air of this beautiful moonlight night to that of the horribly

close and smoky den we have just quitted?"

The licentiate did not reply. The bell, whose tollings became more and more distinct, evidently exercised upon my companion a species of influence to me utterly inexplicable. I know not if Don Tadeo at length remarked my undisguised surprise; but perhaps he but gave way to the strength of his feelings when, grasping my hand, and amid stifled sobs, he let these strange words escape:—

"You must listen to me; I never hear the tolling of this passing-bell without beholding, as in a strange and fantastic dream, the saddest episode of my adventurous life flit before my eyes. Nothing in me will more vividly excite your surprise when you shall have learned the horrible event this passing-bell recalls to my memory."

I made a sign to the licentiate that I was ready to listen to him; and I now transcribe the story as nearly as possible as he related it to me, and with a degree of coolness and self-possession, too, that I was scarcely prepared for after his sudden and agitated exordium:—

"In the year 1825 an attempt at assassination was committed in Mexico. This is unhappily a circumstance of but too ordinary occurrence in the capital, and if public attention was fixed for a brief space upon the matter, it was chiefly on account of the circumstances with which it was accompanied. It was on account of this strangeness that the affair of which I now speak, instead of being briefly related in the last columns of the papers, figured among the events of more or less importance which possess the privilege of occupying for a week or two the attention of the frivolous and idle population of Mexico. A singular mystery, in fact, shrouded this attempt at murder.

"Early one morning, when the Paseo of Bucareli* was yet empty, a hackney coach had taken up its station in a retired part of the promenade. The coachman had descended from his box, and now held himself discreetly aloof, as if he divined the motives for which he had been hired. Was it a man or a woman that this *providencia* (you know that it is by this name they designate the hackney-coaches of Mexico) had led to a rendezvous? The carefully closed blinds interdicted all conjecture in this respect; but later it was known that there was in this carriage

a young female of exquisite beauty, who, giving way to Creole vanity, had decked herself for the occasion in all her diamonds. Creoles, you know, have the weakness of wishing to appear as rich as they are beautiful; and yet, with all that she could do, this young girl was still more beautiful than she was rich. Some minutes had thus elapsed when a man, enveloped in the folds of a large cloak, advanced towards the carriage; the door flew open at his approach, and as quickly closed upon him.

"A meeting of this kind was too much a thing of daily occurrence to astonish the coachman, who flung himself beneath the shade of the poplar-trees, and soon fell fast asleep. When he awoke, the carriage was still in the same place, but the shadow of the poplar-trees, instead of stretching towards the west as at the hour when he fell asleep, now pointed towards the east. In other words, the sun had now nearly completed its course, and the evening had succeeded to the morn. It was the hour when the Paseo began to fill. The coachman, astonished at having slept so long, jumped up, ran to the carriage, and called, but receiving no reply, he opened the door. A horrible spectacle met his eyes. In a half-sitting, half recumbent posture, lay the young female in a state of insensibility, the cause being but too clearly explained by the blood with which the vehicle was inundated. The life-blood still flowed from a deep wound in the side, which at first sight appeared mortal, evidently inflicted by the surely-directed poniard of some skilful brigand. Of all the brilliants which had sparkled on the bosom and in the ears of the young Creole not one remained. The unhappy girl had thus found an assassin in place of a lover, and theft had followed murder. The cries of the coachman soon attracted a crowd of persons, among whom was fortunately a physician, who, after a short examination, discovered that the victim still breathed. Nothing now remained but to carry her to the nearest convent, which was accordingly done. This convent was that of the Bernardines. This first duty of humanity fulfilled, the task of justice commenced. But while the physicians endeavoured, and successfully too, to restore the unhappy woman to consciousness, the exertions of the magistrates to arrest the murderer were not crowned with the same success. The coachman was the first individual arrested; but his inno-

* A public promenade in Mexico.

cence being speedily recognised, he was set at liberty. They arrested afterwards a young Spaniard, whose marked attentions to the young Creole were known to every one. The latter learned thus at the same time the infidelity and probable death of her he desired to make his wife. It was a frightful blow"—(here the voice of Don Tadeo trembled visibly)—"and it almost cost him his reason. At the end of a year the Spaniard was released for want of proofs, but he left his prison ruined by law expenses, and with his heart deprived of its sweetest illusions. He learned then that she who had deceived him, and whom he had wept for dead, still lived, but that she had renounced the world, and had taken the veil in the convent to which she had been carried after the event of the Paseo. He made no attempt, however, to see her; but all his efforts, all his thoughts, were now directed to one end, and that end was vengeance. Mexican justice had failed in tracing the assassin; he determined upon continuing the too speedily abandoned researches, and of succeeding even where the culpable indolence of the authorities had declared success impossible."

Here the licentiate paused; the convent bell still continued its dismal tollings, and I began to comprehend the emotion which these lugubrious sounds aroused in his mind.

"This Spaniard, you must have already guessed, was myself. I had succeeded in abstracting from the papers connected with this sad affair a letter found upon the young girl, appointing the meeting between her and her assassin. This was for me the sole thread by the aid of which I was to wind my way through that sombre labyrinth in which Mexican justice had lost itself. From that moment there commenced in my career a dark and agitated period which death alone can terminate. I made up my mind to live from henceforth amid thieves and murderers, in the hope, with the aid of their revelations, of gaining knowledge of the secret which preoccupied my mind. Under the pretext of practising my profession, I eagerly embraced all lawsuits which offered me an occasion of interrogating these wretches, of penetrating into their haunts and lurking-places. From that moment there was not a single crime committed in Mexico, the perpetrator of which I could not at need have denounced to justice. The most secret associations

of malefactors had no mysteries for me. You have doubtless heard mention made of the celebrated band of the *ensebados*, who, for an entire year, spread terror throughout the whole of the Mexican capital. These *ensebados* were men who at night, after having imbued their bodies with grease or oil, would dart suddenly from their lurking-places on the unwary and belated passenger, and either plunder him of his property or stab him with their poniards. One only of these bandits, as unseizable as a snake, was enabled to escape the efforts of a body of vigorous soldiers. Well, Senor, this chief of the *ensebados* is known to me; he has not quitted Mexico, and at any day, or any hour, I can name him if need requires. This is but one of my singular discoveries. I could give you a thousand. Thanks to this life of incessant and perilous research, I acquired a degree of experience which rendered me the dread of these wretches whose disreputable antecedents were all known to me. Very frequently, also, my life was in danger, and more than one malefactor has attempted to punish in my person an incommodeous overseer; but the services which my knowledge of the law enables me to render them, have acquired for me, on the other hand, a number of clients sufficiently devoted to my interests to prevent a recurrence of these attempts, which would cost my enemies dear. At the present moment I enjoy almost with impunity the influence which I exercise over the most redoubtable brigands in Mexico; and, as you can yourself perceive, I have at my order a well-disciplined force, ready to lend support to honest men who may stand in need of my assistance."

"This is my case," replied I, "and I cannot help felicitating myself on having been so fortunate as to meet with you; but you do not tell me if your efforts to discover the assassin of the Paseo were finally crowned with success."

"Completely so. I was fortunate enough to discover the evangelist whose pen, under the dictation of a cowardly assassin, had traced the fatal lines which had lured my betrothed to the Paseo. This individual was known to the writer, and he put me on his track. I discovered him; I had him in my power, and could at any moment deliver him up to justice. By so doing I should thus have attained the end for which I had been so long and painfully striving. But, would you believe it, Senor, I did nothing of the kind.

Many years had elapsed since the day on which the attempt had been committed ; and, by dint of living with these unfortunates, I had learned to pity rather than to hate them. I had succeeded even in forging for myself, as it were, out of their perversity, a set of weapons by the aid of which I could terminate certain affairs before which Mexican justice avowed itself powerless. The assassin of the Paseo is one of these instruments that I could break at a word, but which I prefer employing under my own eye in the service of my numerous clients."

A fresh silence succeeded to these words ; the monotonous tolling of the passing-bell still continued.

" Since that period I have never beheld her who was to have been my bride, but who now wears the veil," resumed Don Tadeo ; " but I receive news of her from time to time by a sure channel, and I am aware that for some time back her health has been gradually giving way. You now perceive why the passing-bell of the Bernardines makes me tremble."

I was about to propose to Don Tadeo to descend from the terrace, in order to escape the melancholy influence of this funeral-knell, when the entrance door of the *azatea* creaked upon its hinges, and the ill-favoured Mexican, whom the licentiate had named Navaja, glided rather than walked towards us. He was pale with terror, and every now and then would cast an uneasy glance behind him, as if to assure himself that he was not followed.

" It is the demon in person," cried he, leaning against the balustrade to regain breath.

" Of whom are you speaking ?" demanded the licentiate.

" Of the American ; he is now at his third bottle of *refino*, and is roaring out what he calls his war-song. It is a wild Indian under the skin of a white man. He has been counting up the scalps he has taken, all the murders he has committed in his lifetime ; and—would you believe it ?—he aspires to the honour of adding the skin of my skull to the rest of his trophies ! I repeat to you, this man is a devil—he literally smells of blood."

" How modest we are become all at once !" replied the licentiate, in the scornful tone of voice he habitually made use of when addressing the Mexican. " And since when, may I ask, has the sight and smell of blood been so terrible to you ?"

It was a fearful gaiety that of Don Tadeo. The question which he had addressed to the Mexican had apparently excited in the breast of the latter that sort of cowardly rage and hatred which a tiger might be supposed to feel for his human custodian. Don Tadeo, however, appeared not to remark the impression he had made ; he seemed, on the contrary, to take a peculiar pleasure in irritating the wretch whom he kept almost quivering with suppressed rage under his cutting sarcasms. An allusion to the affair of the Paseo suddenly explained to me the reason of this outbreak of irony. I had before me the man upon whom the licentiate had power at any moment to wreak his vengeance, but whom he permitted to live ; he who had attempted the life of the unhappy girl whose passing-bell was perhaps even now tolling. " Does not that bell from the Bernardines yonder remind you of anything ?" were the words made use of by Don Tadeo ; but this last stroke had exhausted the patience of the Mexican, who, in place of replying, sprang on the licentiate, and endeavoured to wrest his rapier from him ; but the latter was on his guard, and, without even making use of his sword, repelled his aggressor with a vigorous arm.

" Come, come," said he, " you forget with whom you have to do. I pardon you this time ; but away with you this instant out of my sight."

Utterly stupefied and crestfallen, the Mexican did not wait to hear the order repeated, but with downcast eyes and stealthy tread retired from the *azatea*. I could not resist complimenting Don Tadeo on the courage and coolness of temper he had displayed in this little affair. " What would you have ?" replied he, with a melancholy smile ; " you know in what university I have taken my degrees. I am sufficiently acquainted with suffering to estimate life at its precise value. But let us descend ; you have no further instructions to give me relative to your affair, and in the course of a few days from this I hope I shall have some good news for you."

We descended rapidly from the *azatea*, and were soon upon the vast and now deserted Plaza Mayor, at the entrance of the *Callejon del Arco*. Here we separated ; the licentiate proceeding towards the Rua de los Batanes, and I to that of the Monterilla.

A month had elapsed without my hearing any tidings of the licentiate, and I

was beginning to get seriously alarmed for his safety, fearing lest he had fallen victim to some of those ambushes so frequently laid for him, when one morning a billet which he transmitted to me by the hand of his clerk Ortiz, explained the reason of his long delay. Two causes had prevented him from occupying himself in my business with his customary activity:—"The first cause, and that which you have probably guessed," wrote he, "is this—the bell we heard a month ago was for *her*. When I had partially got over this blow, and began my labours afresh, I was suddenly confined to my bed in consequence of a wound—happily slight—received in one of those ambushes in which I have more than once nearly met my end. I can now, however, inform you that your affair is in the highway towards a speedy settlement. I have succeeded, but not without difficulty, in discovering the whereabouts of Don Dionisio Peralta, and have set the three worthies whom you know upon his track. Adieu. Make no efforts to see me, and in a few days you will receive, I trust, more satisfactory intelligence."

Eight days, in fact, had nearly elapsed when I received a fresh message from the licentiate: this letter contained a detailed account of the campaign he had been carrying on against Dionisio Peralta, and which had happily terminated in favour of Don Tadeo. The licentiate's three Janissaries, namely, Pepito Rechifla, John Pearce, the fire-eating Yankee, and Navaja, the Mexican, had successively waited on Dionisio Peralta to reclaim payment of a debt which they affirmed had been ceded to them by the licentiate, Don Tadeo. Peralta, who, despite his magnificent airs, was a gentleman of their own stamp, had at first received them with all the arrogance of a stage captain; but the significant threats of the three bandits had speedily brought him to terms. Peralta well knew the reputations of the men with whom he had to do; it was war to the knife that was declared; while the influence of the licentiate, whose arm directed these formidable bullies, rendered the match decidedly unequal. He had accordingly ended by proposing an arrangement which the licentiate had hastened to accept. Peralta possessed in the little village of Tacuba, at about a league's distance from Mexico, a small country-house, the value of which about equalled, or nearly so, the amount of his debt. He consented to make this over to Don Tadeo,

who had at once taken possession of the property in his own name. It only remained for me now to receive over this house from the licentiate, in order to conclude the whole affair. Accordingly, Don Tadeo warned me to expect him at an early hour on the following day. We were to repair together to the ancient domain of my former debtor, where I should be at once installed as legitimate proprietor.

On the following morning the licentiate was punctual to his appointment, bringing with him two saddle-horses. I was anxious to make acquaintance with my new property, and, above all, to witness the ceremonies incidental to a taking possession in Mexico. As we rode along I felicitated the licentiate on the lucky star which, in this recent occurrence, had once again protected his life; expressing at the same time also my regret at having, perhaps, drawn down upon him the vengeance of Dionisio Peralta; but he replied, that nothing in the affair seemed to justify my suppositions, and that, according to all appearances, the man who had projected this latest attempt on his life was none other than the assassin of the Paseo. "However that may be," he added, "my suspicions of Master Navaja have not deterred me from employing him in your affair, where his zeal has been very useful to me. With the exception of some hours of intoxication or vertigo, during which they are half-mad, these men obey blindly at all times the will of him who makes them feel his superiority. Consequently, in a letter that Peralta wrote to me to announce his submission, I have read with regret certain threats directed against the rascal who attempted my life, and who it appears has been the most active of the three worthies I set upon your debtor. As Peralta is not a man to threaten in vain, I fear I shall be but too soon revenged."

While thus chatting together we had reached the country, if one can call by this name the arid plains near the capital, which we now crossed at full gallop. The heat was almost insufferable, and a mournful silence reigned around us. All at once the sounds of rapidly-advancing horse's hoofs reached our ears, and we were soon joined by a caballero, in whose person I had no difficulty in recognising Master Pepito Rechifla. The bandit was attired with a certain air of dandyism; he wore a blue *manga* lined with Indian yellow, and bestrode a horse equipped in the height of Mexican fashion. He saluted

us with an air of mingled courtesy and protection.

"You will pardon me, Señor Licentiate," said he, "if I take the liberty of joining you; but, as you told me that you purposed making a little excursion to-day, I thought you would not be sorry to have one companion more. This road is not over-safe, and," added he, casting an expressive glance at the arm on which the licentiate still wore a scarf, "it is not always prudent to risk yourself so far from home. I have, however, reason to believe that we shall not have any occasion to draw steel to-day." And as he pronounced this phrase with solemn slowness, Pepito leaned over and whispered some words into the ear of the licentiate, the import of which I could not catch; I remarked only that he called the attention of Don Tadeo to a group of rocky hills which rose to our left, and over which now hovered a flock of large black vultures. Without replying to Pepito, the licentiate checked his steed for a moment, and turned his eyes towards the hills with an expression of painful surprise. He afterwards made a sign to us to continue our course, spurring his horse vigorously, a proceeding which we hastened to follow; and some minutes later we were galloping through the streets of the little village in which my new property was situated.

The house ceded to me by Don Tadeo was situated at the farthest extremity of the village. Numerous groups of peasantry, who had repaired hither in order to come in for their share of the largesses which invariably accompany every ceremony in Mexico, were stationed before the house, and aided us in recognising it. It was a little building of very deplorable appearance, ornamented in front by a sort of corridor supported by brick pillars. Numerous crevices traversed the walls in all directions, indicating the imperious necessity of a thorough repair. At the back of the house, between four walls crowned with moss and bits of broken glass, lay a little garden overrun with rank weeds. The care-taker who had been placed in the house by Don Tadeo opened the door for us, and we entered. The interior was even more desolate than its outward appearance had promised; the plaster of the walls and ceilings was crumbling away in large patches; the worm-eaten and rickety stairs creaked sadly under our footsteps, and the garden could show scarcely any produce save an inextricable mass of thistles, nettles, and

houseleek, the whole overshadowed by a few fruit-trees of very sickly appearance. Taking it altogether, however, the dilapidated little tenement, with its uncultivated dependency, might be about equal in value to the sum due, and that was all that I required, especially as, with a debtor of Don Dionisio Peralta's kidney, it would not do to be too particular.

After inspecting the lower part of the house and the garden, we ascended to the first floor. The first apartment which we entered seemed to be the sitting-room, and evidently had not been opened for years, to judge by the musty odour which saluted our olfactories. We hastened to throw open the massive shutters, and give admittance to the light and air. A vast quantity of cobwebs, as thick and strong as the dry moss which floats from the cedar-trees of Chapultepec, hung in festoons from the ceiling. The cupboards, which we inspected next, were completely empty with the exception of one; that contained a thick dusty volume, which the licentiate, after a brief examination, placed under his cloak. Our inspection was soon over. "Call the witnesses," said Don Tadeo to Pepito, whom we had promoted on this occasion to the office of master of the ceremonies. The vagabond, majestically draped in his blue *manga*, forthwith advanced to the open window, and uttered a short but brilliant harangue to the ragged auditory assembled without. Pepito's eloquence succeeded beyond our expectations, and in a very few moments the entrance court was filled with a far greater number of witnesses than the law requires. Never in my life had I beheld such a collection of cut-throat visages. We descended, preceded by Pepito, into the courtyard, and from thence, followed by the crowd of witnesses, into the garden.

"Senors caballeros," shouted Pepito, in a voice of thunder, "you are all witnesses that the illustrious Señor here present" (here Pepito pointed to me) "takes regular and formal possession of this property in the name of the law—DIOS Y LIBERTAD!"

Don Tadeo and I now advanced in our turns, and on the latter's instructions, I tore up a handful of grass and cast it over my head; then I threw a stone over the garden wall. This was a formal act of taking possession according to Mexican law. A general hurrah escaped from the assembled witnesses. It only remained for me now to fulfil the last formality which custom imposes, namely, to distri-

bute a few piastres among the throng of vagabonds which had flocked from all parts to wish me welcome. This done, my witnesses, under the guidance of Pepito, proceeded to the nearest tavern in order to dispense my bounty as best suited them.

"Well, Senor," said the licentiate to me, "you have at length succeeded in recovering your money, or at least an equivalent for it. What think you of my method of doing business with refractory debtors?"

"I think, Don Tadeo, that you play a very dangerous game, and I have a piece of advice to give you; it is simply this—namely, to renounce as speedily as possible the trade of redresser of wrongs; in which, unless I am greatly mistaken, the losses must, sooner or later, exceed by a large sum the gains."

"You see, however, that I have hitherto been tolerably fortunate in my enterprises. But, however that may be, in case a chance thrust should some day or other put a premature end to my existence, I am anxious that you should retain a little *souvenir* of our acquaintance. Here is a book which has not been included in the inventory of the household effects; the work is old and is of some value."

"I return you many thanks," said I to the licentiate, taking the dusty volume; "but the recital that I heard from your lips on the *azatea* of the old house of the *Callejon del Arco* will recall you more vividly to my memory than this scarce old tome; it is not every client who is so fortunate as to meet with a romance such as yours when he expected but a legal consultation."

It was now time to return to the capital. Without waiting for Pepito, the remainder of whose day would probably be spent at the tavern, we pushed on at a hand-gallop through the plain. The heat was even more oppressive than it had been at our departure. We soon came in sight of the

hills which Pepito had pointed out to the licentiate. The flock of vultures which hovered over the rocks seemed to have increased in numbers, and a fetid odour reached us with the little clouds of dust which were ever and anon wafted by the breeze across the plain.

"If you were curious enough to read on to the last page of the romance you spoke of just now," said the licentiate to me, "I would propose to you to canter up to those hills yonder; but I fear you have rather susceptible nerves."

"And what is there to be seen among the rocks?"

"Merely a dead body, that's all. Don't you see how the vultures are swarming round it? One of the three worthies whom I sent in pursuit of your debtor, has paid in his person for the rest. Well, God is just! The man who has fallen under Peralta's knife is the assassin of the Pazeo de Bucareli. The romance is now complete, is it not?"

"Most assuredly it is; and the sight of a corpse half-devoured by vultures would add nothing to the impression left by your recital on my mind."

"Well, I see we must spare your nerves," said the licentiate, putting spurs to his horse; "let us push on for Mexico."

On the Plaza Mayor we separated with mutual promises of shortly meeting again, but fate disposed it otherwise. A few weeks after my installation into the property given up by Peralta, I quitted Mexico, on a tour through the cities and wilds of that wonderful and to me most fascinating country. On my return to the capital, the gaming-house of the *Callejon del Arco* was closed, and the evangelist Tio Luquillas, to whom I again applied for information of my friend the licentiate, informed me that he had returned to Spain. Since that period I have made various efforts to discover his whereabouts, but it is almost needless to say, that my researches have been in vain.

LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.

By the Author of "LADY LISLE," "AURORA FLOYD," &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DR. MOSGRAVE'S ADVICE.

My lady slept. Through that long winter night she slept soundly. Criminals have often so slept their last sleep upon earth; and have been found in the grey morning slumbering peacefully by the gaoler who came to wake them.

The game had been played and lost. I do not think that my lady had thrown away a card, or missed the making of a trick which she might by any possibility have made; but her opponent's hand had been too powerful for her, and he had won.

She was more at peace now than she had ever been since that day—so soon after her second marriage—on which she had seen the announcement of the return of George Talboys from the gold-fields of Australia. She might rest now, for they now knew the worst of her. There were no new discoveries to be made. She had flung the horrible burden of an almost unendurable secret off her shoulders, and her selfish sensuous nature resumed its mastery of her. She slept, peacefully nestled in her downy bed, under the soft mountain of silken coverlet, and in the sombre shade of the green velvet curtains. She had ordered her maid to sleep on a low couch in the same room, and she had also ordered that a lamp should be kept burning all night.

Not that I think she had any fear of shadowy visitations in the still hours of the night. She was too thoroughly selfish to care very much for anything that could not hurt her; and she had never heard of a ghost doing any actual and palpable harm. She had feared Robert Audley, but she feared him no longer. He had done his worst; she knew that he could do no more without bringing everlasting disgrace upon the name he venerated.

"They'll put me away somewhere, I suppose," my lady thought; "that is the worst they can do for me."

She looked upon herself as a species of state prisoner, who would have to be taken good care of. A second Iron Mask who must be provided for in some comfortable place of confinement. She aban-

doned herself to a dull indifference. She had lived a hundred lives within the space of the last few days of her existence, and she had worn out her capacity for suffering; for a time at least.

She took a cup of strong green tea and a few delicate fragments of toast the next morning with the same air of quiet relish common to condemned creatures who eat their last meal, while the gaolers look on to see that they do not bite fragments off the crockery, or swallow the tea-spoon, or do any other violent act tending to the evasion of Mr. Jack Ketch. She ate her breakfast, and took her morning bath, and emerged, with perfumed hair, and in the most exquisitely careless of morning toilets, from her luxurious dressing-room. She looked round at all the costly appointments of the room with a yearning lingering gaze before she turned to leave it; but there was not one tender recollection in her mind of the man who had caused the furnishing of the chamber, and who, in every precious toy that was scattered about in the reckless profusion of magnificence, had laid before her a mute evidence of his love. My lady was thinking how much the things had cost, and how painfully probable it was that the luxurious apartment would soon pass out of her possession.

She looked at herself in the cheval-glass before she left the room. A long night's rest had brought back the delicate rose-tints of her complexion, and the natural lustre of her blue eyes. That unnatural light which had burned so fearfully the day before had gone, and my lady smiled triumphantly as she contemplated the reflection of her beauty. The days were gone in which her enemies could have branded her with white-hot irons, and burned away the loveliness which had done such mischief. Whatever they did to her, they must leave her her beauty, she thought. At the worst, they were powerless to rob her of that.

The March day was bright and sunny, with a cheerless sunshine certainly. My lady wrapped herself in an Indian shawl; a shawl that had cost Sir Michael a hundred guineas. I think she had an idea that it would be well to wear this costly garment; so that if hustled suddenly

away, she might carry at least one of her possessions with her. Remember how much she had perilled for a fine house and gorgeous furniture, for carriages and horses, jewels and laces; and do not wonder if she clung with a desperate tenacity to gauds and gew-gaws in the hour of her despair. If she had been Judas, she would have held to her thirty pieces of silver to the last moment of her shameful life.

Mr. Robert Audley breakfasted in the library. He sat long over his solitary cup of tea, smoking his meerschaum pipe, and meditating darkly upon the task that lay before him.

"I will appeal to the experience of this Dr. Mosgrave," he thought; "physicians and lawyers are the confessors of this prosaic nineteenth century. Surely he will be able to help me."

The first fast train from London arrived at Audley at half-past ten o'clock, and at five minutes before eleven, Richards, the grave servant, announced Dr. Alwyn Mosgrave.

The physician from Saville Row was a tall man, of about fifty years of age. He was thin and sallow, with lantern jaws, and eyes of a pale feeble grey, that seemed as if they had once been blue, and had faded by the progress of time to their present neutral shade. However powerful the science of medicine as wielded by Dr. Alwyn Mosgrave, it had not been strong enough to put flesh upon his bones, or brightness into his face. He had a strangely expressionless, and yet strangely attentive countenance. He had the face of a man who had spent the greater part of his life in listening to other people, and who had parted with his own individuality and his own passions at the very outset of his career.

He bowed to Robert Audley, took the opposite seat indicated by him, and addressed his attentive face to the young barrister. Robert saw that the physician's glance for a moment lost its quiet look of attention, and became earnest and searching.

"He is wondering whether I am the patient," thought Mr. Audley, "and is looking for the diagnoses of madness in my face."

Dr. Mosgrave spoke as if in answer to this thought.

"It is not about your own—health—that you wish to consult me?" he said, interrogatively.

"Oh no!"

Dr. Mosgrave looked at his watch, a fifty-guinea Benson-made chronometer, which he carried loose in his waistcoat-pocket as carelessly as if it had been a potato.

"I need not remind you that my time is precious," he said; "your telegram informed me that my services were required in a case of—danger—as I apprehend, or I should not be here this morning."

Robert Audley had sat looking gloomily at the fire, wondering how he should begin the conversation, and had needed this reminder of the physician's presence.

"You are very good, Dr. Mosgrave," he said, rousing himself by an effort, "and I thank you very much for having responded to my summons. I am about to appeal to you upon a subject which is more painful to me than words can describe. I am about to implore your advice in a most difficult case, and I trust, almost blindly, to your experience to rescue me, and others who are very dear to me, from a cruel and complicated position."

The business-like attention in Dr. Mosgrave's face grew into a look of interest as he listened to Robert Audley.

"The revelation made by the patient to the physician is, I believe, as sacred as the confession of a penitent to his priest?" Robert asked, gravely.

"Quite as sacred."

"A solemn confidence, to be violated under no circumstances?"

"Most certainly."

Robert Audley looked at the fire again. How much should he tell, or how little, of the dark history of his uncle's second wife.

"I have been given to understand, Dr. Mosgrave, that you have devoted much of your attention to the treatment of insanity."

"Yes, my practice is almost confined to the treatment of mental diseases."

"Such being the case, I think I may venture to conclude that you sometimes receive strange, and even terrible, revelations."

Dr. Mosgrave bowed.

He looked like a man who could have carried, safely locked in his passionless breast, the secrets of a nation, and who would have suffered no inconvenience from the weight of such a burden.

"The story which I am about to tell you is not my own story," said Robert, after a pause; "you will forgive me, therefore, if I once more remind you that I can only reveal it upon the understanding that under no circumstances, or upon

no apparent justification, is that confidence to be betrayed."

Dr. Mosgrave bowed again. A little sternly, perhaps, this time.

"I am all attention, Mr. Audley," he said, coldly.

Robert Audley drew his chair nearer to that of the physician, and in a low voice began the story which my lady had told upon her knees in the same chamber upon the previous night. Dr. Mosgrave's listening face, turned always towards the speaker, betrayed no surprise at that strange revelation. He smiled once, a grave quiet smile, when Mr. Audley came to that part of the story which told of the conspiracy at Ventnor; but he was not surprised. Robert Audley ended his story at the point at which Sir Michael Audley had interrupted my lady's confession. He told nothing of the disappearance of George Talboys, nor of the horrible suspicions that had grown out of that disappearance. He told nothing of the fire at the Castle Inn.

Dr. Mosgrave shook his head gravely when Mr. Audley came to the end of his story.

"You have nothing further to tell me?" he said.

"No. I do not think there is anything more that need be told," Robert answered, rather evasively.

"You would wish to prove that this lady is mad, and therefore irresponsible for her actions, Mr. Audley?" said the physician.

Robert Audley stared wondering at the mad doctor. By what process had he so rapidly arrived at the young man's secret desire!

"Yes, I would rather, if possible, think her mad; I should be glad to find that excuse for her."

"And to save the *esclandre* of a Chancery suit, I suppose, Mr. Audley," said Dr. Mosgrave.

Robert shuddered, as he bowed an assent to this remark. It was something worse than a Chancery suit that he dreaded, with a horrible fear. It was a trial for murder that so long had haunted his dreams. How often he had awoke in an agony of shame from a vision of a crowded court-house, and his uncle's wife in a criminal dock, hemmed in on every side by a sea of eager faces.

"I fear that I shall not be of any use to you," the physician said, quietly; "I will see the lady if you please, but I do not believe that she is mad."

"Why not?"

"Because there is no evidence of madness in anything that she has done. She ran away from her home, because her home was not a pleasant one, and she left it in the hope of finding a better. There is no madness in that. She committed the crime of bigamy, because by that crime she obtained fortune and position. There is no madness there. When she found herself in a desperate position she did not grow desperate. She employed intelligent means, and she carried out a conspiracy which required coolness and deliberation in its execution. There is no madness in that."

"But the taints of hereditary insanity—"

"May descend to the third generation and appear in the lady's children, if she have any. Madness is not necessarily transmitted from mother to daughter. I should be glad to help you, if I could, Mr. Audley, but I do not think there is any proof of insanity in the story you have told me. I do not think any jury in England would accept the plea of insanity in such a case as this. The best thing that you can do with this lady is to send her back to her first husband; if he will have her."

Robert started at this sudden mention of his friend. "Her first husband is dead," he answered, "at least he has been missing for some time—and I have reason to believe that he is dead."

Dr. Mosgrave saw the startled movement, and heard the embarrassment in Robert Audley's voice as he spoke of George Talboys.

"The lady's first husband is missing," he said, with a strange emphasis on the word—"you think that he is dead."

He paused for a few moments and looked at the fire, as Robert had looked before.

"Mr. Audley," he said presently, "there must be no half-confidences between us. You have not told me all."

Robert, looking up suddenly, plainly expressed in his face the surprise he felt at these words.

"I should be very poorly able to meet the contingencies of my professional experience," said Dr. Mosgrave, "if I could not perceive where confidence ends and reservation begins. You have only told me half this lady's story, Mr. Audley. You must tell me more before I can offer you any advice. What has become of the first husband?"

He asked this question in a decisive tone. As if he knew it to be the key-stone of an arch.

"I have already told you, Dr. Mosgrave, that I do not know."

"Yes," answered the physician, "but your face has told me what you have withheld from me; it has told me that you *suspect*."

Robert Audley was silent.

"If I am to be of use to you, you must trust me, Mr. Audley," said the physician. "The first husband disappeared — how and when? I want to know the history of his disappearance."

Robert paused for some time before he replied to this speech; but by and by, he lifted his head, which had been bent in an attitude of earnest thought, and addressed the physician.

"I will trust you, Dr. Mosgrave," he said, "I will confide entirely in your honour and goodness. I do not ask you to do any wrong to society; but I ask you to save our stainless name from degradation and shame, if you can do so conscientiously."

He told the story of George's disappearance, and of his own doubts and fears, heaven knows how reluctantly.

Dr. Mosgrave listened as quietly as he had listened before. Robert concluded with an earnest appeal to the physician's best feelings. He implored him to spare the generous old man, whose fatal confidence in a wicked woman had brought such misery upon his declining years.

It was impossible to draw any conclusion either favourable or otherwise from Dr. Mosgrave's attentive face. He rose when Robert had finished speaking, and looked at his watch once more.

"I can only spare you twenty minutes," he said, "I will see the lady if you please. You say her mother died in a mad-house."

"She did. Will you see Lady Audley alone?"

"Yes, alone if you please."

Robert rang for my lady's maid, and under convoy of that smart young damsel the physician found his way to the octagon ante-chamber, and the fairy boudoir with which it communicated.

Ten minutes afterwards he returned to the library in which Robert sat waiting for him.

"I have talked to the lady," he said quietly, "and we understand each other very well. There is latent insanity! Insanity which might never appear; or which

might appear only once or twice in a life-time. It would be *dementia* in its worst phase perhaps: acute mania; but its duration would be very brief, and it would only arise under extreme mental pressure. The lady is not mad; but she has the hereditary taint in her blood. She has the cunning of madness, with the prudence of intelligence. I will tell you what she is, Mr. Audley. She is dangerous!"

Dr. Mosgrave walked up and down the room once or twice before he spoke again.

"I will not discuss the probabilities of the suspicion that distresses you, Mr. Audley," he said presently, "but I will tell you this much. I do not advise any *esclandre*. This Mr. George Talboys has disappeared, but you have no evidence of his death. If you could produce evidence of his death, you could produce no evidence against this lady, beyond the one fact that she had a powerful motive for getting rid of him. No jury in the United Kingdom would condemn her upon such evidence as that."

Robert Audley interrupted Doctor Mosgrave hastily.

"I assure you, my dear sir," he said, "that my greatest fear is the necessity of any exposure—any disgrace."

"Certainly, Mr. Audley," answered the physician coolly, "but you cannot expect me to assist you to condone one of the worst offences against society. If I saw adequate reason for believing that a murder had been committed by this woman, I should refuse to assist you in smuggling her away out of the reach of justice, although the honour of a hundred noble families might be saved by my doing so. But I do not see adequate reason for your suspicions; and I will do my best to help you."

Robert Audley grasped the physician's hands in both his own.

"I will thank you when I am better able to do so," he said, with emotion; "I will thank you in my uncle's name as well as in my own."

"I have only five minutes more, and I have a letter to write," said Dr. Mosgrave, smiling at the young man's energy.

He seated himself at a writing table in the window, dipped his pen in the ink and wrote rapidly for about seven minutes. He had filled three sides of a sheet of note paper when he threw down his pen and folded his letter.

He put this letter into an envelope and delivered it, unsealed, to Robert Audley.

The address which it bore was—

Monsieur Val,
Villebrumeuse,
Belgium.

Mr. Audley looked rather doubtfully from this address to the doctor, who was putting on his gloves as deliberately as if his life had never known a more solemn purpose than the proper adjustment of them.

"That letter," he said, in answer to Robert Audley's inquiring look, "is written to my friend Monsieur Val, the proprietor and medical superintendent of a very excellent *maison de santé* in the town of Villebrumeuse. We have known each other for many years, and he will no doubt willingly receive Lady Audley into his establishment, and charge himself with the full responsibility of her future life; it will not be a very eventful one!"

Robert Audley would have spoken, he would have once more expressed his gratitude for the help which had been given to him, but Dr. Mosgrave checked him with an authoritative gesture.

"From the moment in which Lady Audley enters that house," he said, "her life, so far as life is made up of action and variety, will be finished. Whatever secrets she may have will be secrets for ever! Whatever crimes she may have committed she will be able to commit no more. If you were to dig a grave for her in the nearest churchyard and bury her alive in it, you could not more safely shut her from the world and all worldly associations. But as a physiologist and as an honest man I believe you could do no better service to society than by doing this; for physiology is a lie if the woman I saw ten minutes ago is a woman to be trusted at large. If she could have sprung at my throat and strangled me with her little hands, as I sat talking to her just now, she would have done it."

"She suspected your purpose, then!"

"She knew it. 'You think I am mad like my mother, and you have come to question me,' she said. 'You are watching for some sign of the dreadful taint in my blood.' Good day to you, Mr. Audley," the physician added hurriedly, "my time was up ten minutes ago, it is as much as I shall do to catch the train."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BURIED ALIVE.

ROBERT AUDLEY sat alone in the library with the physician's letter upon the table before him, thinking of the work which was still to be done.

The young barrister had constituted himself the denouncer of this wretched woman. He had been her judge; and he was now her gaoler. Not until he had delivered the letter which lay before him to its proper address, not until he had given up his charge into the safe keeping of the foreign mad-house doctor, not until then would the dreadful burden be removed from him and his duty done.

He wrote a few lines to my lady, telling her that he was going to carry her away from Audley Court to a place from which she was not likely to return, and requesting her to lose no time in preparing for the journey. He wished to start that evening, if possible, he told her.

Miss Susan Martin, the lady's-maid, thought it a very hard thing to have to pack her mistress's trunks in such a hurry, but my lady assisted in the task. It seemed a pleasant excitement to her, this folding and refolding of silks and velvets, this gathering together of jewels and millinery. They were not going to rob her of her possessions, she thought. They were going to send her away to some place of exile; but even exile was not hopeless, for there was scarcely any spot upon this wide earth in which her beauty would not constitute a little royalty, and win her liege knights and willing subjects. She toiled resolutely in directing and assisting her servant, who scented bankruptcy and ruin in all this packing up and hurrying away, and was therefore rather languid and indifferent in the discharge of her duties; and at six o'clock in the evening she sent her attendant to tell Mr. Audley that she was ready to depart as soon as he pleased.

Robert had consulted a volume of *Bradshaw*, and had discovered that Villebrumeuse lay out of the track of all railway traffic, and was only approachable by diligence from Brussels. The mail for Dover left London Bridge at nine o'clock, and could be easily caught by Robert and his charge, as the seven o'clock up-train from Audley reached Shoreditch at a quarter past eight. Travelling by the Dover and Calais route, they would

reach Villebrumeuse by the following afternoon or evening.

What need have we to follow them upon that dismal night journey? My lady lay on one of the narrow cabin couches, comfortably wrapped in her furs; she had not forgotten her favourite Russian sables even in this last hour of shame and misery. Her mercenary soul hankered greedily after the costly and beautiful things of which she had been mistress. She had hidden away fragile tea-cups and covered vases of Sèvres and Dresden among the folds of her silken dinner dresses. She had secreted jewelled and golden drinking cups amongst her delicate linen. She would have taken the pictures from the walls, and the Gobelin tapestry from the chairs, had it been possible for her to do so. She had taken all she could, and she accompanied Mr. Audley with a sulky submission that was the despondent obedience of despair.

Robert Audley paced the deck of the steamer as the Dover clocks were striking twelve, and the town glimmered like a luminous crescent across the widening darkness of the sea. The vessel flew swiftly through the rolling waters towards the friendly Gallic shore, and Mr. Audley sighed a long sigh of relief as he remembered how soon his work would be done. He thought of the wretched creature lying forlorn and friendless in the cabin below. But when he pitied her most, and he could not but sometimes pity her for her womanhood and her helplessness, his friend's face came back upon him, bright and hopeful as he had seen it only on that first day of George's return from the Antipodes, and with that memory there returned his horror of the shameful lie that had broken the husband's heart.

"Can I ever forget it?" he thought; "can I ever forget his blank white face as he sat opposite to me at the coffee house, with the *Times* newspaper in his hand? There are some crimes that can never be atoned for, and this is one of them. If I could bring George Talboys to life to-morrow, I could never heal that horrible heart-wound; I could never make him the man he was before he read that printed lie."

It was late in the afternoon of the next day when the diligence bumped and rattled over the uneven paving of the principal street in Villebrumeuse. The old ecclesiastical town, always dull and dreary, seemed more than ordinarily dreary under

the grey evening sky. The twinkling lamps, lighted early, and glimmering feebly, long distances apart, made the place seem darker rather than lighter, as glowworms intensify the blackness of a hedge by their shining presence. The remote Belgian city was a forgotten, old world place, and bore the dreary evidence of decay upon every façade in the narrow streets, on every dilapidated roof, and feeble pile of chimneys. It was difficult to imagine for what reason the opposite rows of houses had been built so close together as to cause the lumbering diligence to brush the foot passengers off the wretched *trottoir*, unless they took good care to scrape the shop windows with their garments, for there was building room enough and to spare upon the broad expanse of flat country that lay behind the old city. Hypercritical travellers might have wondered why the narrowest and most uncomfortable streets were the busiest and most prosperous, while the nobler and broader thoroughfares were empty and deserted. But Robert Audley thought of none of these things. He sat in a corner of the mouldy carriage, watching my lady in the opposite corner, and wondering what the face was like that was so carefully hidden beneath her veil.

They had had the *coupé* of the diligence to themselves for the whole of the journey, for there were not many travellers between Brussels and Villebrumeuse, and the public conveyance was supported by the force of tradition rather than by any great profit attaching to it as a speculation.

My lady had not spoken during the journey, except to decline some refreshments which Robert had offered her at a halting-place upon the road. Her heart sank when they left Brussels behind, for she had hoped that city might have been the end of her journey, and she had turned with a feeling of sickness and despair from the dull Belgian landscape.

She looked up at last as the vehicle jolted into a great stony quadrangle, which had been the approach to a monastery once, but which was now the courtyard of a dismal hotel, in whose cellars legions of rats skirmished and squeaked even while the broad sunshine was bright in the chambers above.

Lady Audley shuddered as she alighted from the diligence, and found herself in that dreary courtyard. Robert was surrounded by chattering porters, who cla-

moured for his "baggages," and disputed amongst themselves as to the hotel at which he was to rest. One of these men ran away to fetch a hackney-coach at Mr. Audley's behest, and reappeared presently, urging on a pair of horses—which were so small as to suggest the idea that they had been made out of one ordinary-sized animal—with wild shrieks and whoops that had a demoniac sound in the darkness.

Mr. Audley left my lady in a dreary coffee-room in the care of a drowsy attendant while he drove away to some distant part of the quiet city. There was official business to be gone through before Sir Michael's wife could be quietly put away in the place suggested by Dr. Mosgrave. Robert had to see all manner of important personages; and to take numerous oaths; and to exhibit the English physician's letter; and to go through much ceremony of signing and countersigning before he could take his lost friend's cruel wife to the home which was to be her last upon earth. Upwards of two hours elapsed before all this was arranged, and the young man was free to return to the hotel, where he found his charge staring absently at a pair of wax candles with a cup of untasted coffee standing cold and stagnant before her.

Robert handed my lady into the hired vehicle, and took his seat opposite to her once more.

"Where are you going to take me?" she asked at last. "I am tired of being treated like some naughty child, who is put into a dark cellar as a punishment for its offences. Where are you taking me?"

"To a place in which you will have ample leisure to repent the past, Mrs. Talboys," Robert answered, gravely.

They had left the paved streets behind them, and had emerged out of a great gaunt square, in which there appeared to be about half a dozen cathedrals into a smooth boulevard, a broad lamp-lit road, on which the shadows of the leafless branches went and came tremblingly, like the shadows of paralytic skeletons. There were houses here and there upon this boulevard; stately houses, *entre cour et jardin*, and with plaster vases of geraniums on the stone pillars of the ponderous gateways. The rumbling hackney-carriage drove upwards of three-quarters of a mile along this smooth roadway before it drew up against a gateway,

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older and more ponderous than any of those they had passed.

My lady gave a little scream as she looked out of the coach window. The gaunt gateway was lighted by an enormous lamp; a great structure of iron and glass, in which one poor little shivering flame struggled with the March wind.

The coachman rang the bell, and a little wooden door at the side of the gate was opened by a grey-haired man, who looked out at the carriage, and then retired. He reappeared three minutes afterwards behind the folding iron gates, which he unlocked and threw back to their full extent, revealing a dreary desert of stone-paved courtyard.

The coachmen led his wretched horses into this courtyard, and piloted the vehicle to the principal doorway of the house, a great mansion of grey stone, with several long ranges of windows, many of which were dimly lighted, and looked out like the pale eyes of weary watchers upon the darkness of the night.

My lady, watchful and quiet as the cold stars in the wintry sky, looked up at these casements with an earnest and scrutinizing gaze. One of the windows was shrouded by a scanty curtain of faded red; and upon this curtain there went and came a dark shadow, the shadow of a woman with a fantastic head-dress, the shadow of a restless creature, who paced perpetually backwards and forwards before the window.

Sir Michael Audley's wicked wife laid her hand suddenly upon Robert's arm, and pointed with the other hand to this curtained window.

"I know where you have brought me," she said. "This is a MAD-HOUSE."

Mr. Audley did not answer her. He had been standing at the door of the coach when she addressed him, and he quietly assisted her to alight, and led her up a couple of shallow stone-steps, and into the entrance-hall of the mansion. He handed Doctor Mosgrave's letter to a neatly-dressed, cheerful-looking, middle-aged woman, who came tripping out of a little chamber which opened out of the hall, and was very much like the bureau of an hotel. This person smilingly welcomed Robert and his charge; and after despatching a servant with the letter, invited them into her pleasant little apartment, which was gaily furnished with bright amber curtains and heated by a tiny stove.

"Madame finds herself very much

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fatigued," the Frenchwoman said, interrogatively, with a look of intense sympathy, as she placed an arm-chair for my lady.

"Madame" shrugged her shoulders wearily, and looked round the little chamber with a sharp glance of scrutiny that betokened no very great favour.

"WHAT is this place, Robert Audley?" she cried, fiercely. "Do you think I am a baby, that you may juggle with and deceive me—what is it? It is what I said just now, is it not?"

"It is a *maison de santé*, my lady," the young man answered, gravely. "I have no wish to juggle with or to deceive you."

My lady paused for a few moments, looking reflectively at Robert.

"A *maison de santé*," she repeated. "Yes; they manage these things better in France. In England we should call it a mad-house. This is a house for mad people, this, is it not, Madame?" she said, in French, turning upon the woman, and tapping the polished floor with her foot.

"Ah, but no, Madame," the woman answered, with a shrill scream of protest. "It is an establishment of the most agreeable, where one amuses oneself——"

She was interrupted by the entrance of the principal of this agreeable establishment, who came beaming into the room with a radiant smile illuminating his countenance, and with Dr. Mosgrave's letter open in his hand.

It was impossible for him to say *how* enchanted he was to make the acquaintance of M'sieu. There was nothing upon earth which he was not ready to do for M'sieu in his own person, and nothing under heaven which he would not strive to accomplish for him, as the friend of his acquaintance, so very much distinguished, the English doctor. Dr. Mosgrave's letter had given him a brief synopsis of the case, he informed Robert, in an undertone, and he was quite prepared to undertake the care of the charming and very interesting Madame—Madame—

He rubbed his hands politely, and looked at Robert. Mr. Audley remembered, for the first time, that he had been recommended to introduce his wretched charge under a feigned name.

He affected not to hear the proprietor's question. It might seem a very easy matter to have hit upon a heap of names, any one of which would have answered his purpose; but Mr. Audley appeared

suddenly to have forgotten that he had ever heard any mortal appellation except that of himself and his lost friend.

Perhaps the proprietor perceived and understood his embarrassment. He at any rate relieved it by turning to the woman who had received them, and muttering something about No. 14, Bis. The woman took a key from a long range of others that hung over the mantelpiece, and a wax candle from a bracket in a corner of the room, and having lighted the candle, led the way across the stone-paved hall, and up a broad slippery staircase of polished wood.

The English physician had informed his Belgian colleague that money would be of minor consequence in any arrangements made for the comfort of the English lady who was to be committed to his care. Acting upon this hint, Monsieur Val opened the outer door of a stately suite of apartments, which included a lobby, paved with alternate diamonds of black and white marble, but of a dismal and cellarlike darkness; a saloon furnished with gloomy velvet draperies, and with a certain funereal splendour which is not peculiarly conducive to the elevation of the spirits; and a bed-chamber, containing a bed so wondrously made, as to appear to have no opening whatever in its coverings, unless the counterpane had been split asunder with a penknife.

My lady stared dismally round at the range of rooms, which looked dreary enough in the wan light of a single wax candle. This solitary flame, pale and ghostlike in itself, was multiplied by paler phantoms of its ghostliness, which glimmered everywhere about the rooms; in the shadowy depths of the polished floors and wainscot, or the window panes, in the looking-glasses, or in those great expanses of glimmering something which adorned the rooms, and which my lady mistook for costly mirrors, but which were in reality wretched mockeries of burnished tin.

Amid all the faded splendour of shabby velvet, and tarnished gilding, and polished wood, the woman dropped into an arm-chair, and covered her face with her hands. The whiteness of them, and the starry light of diamonds trembling about them glittered in the dimly-lighted chamber. She sat silent, motionless, despairing, sullen, and angry, while Robert and the French doctor retired into an outer chamber, and talked together in undertones. Mr. Audley had very little to say that had

not been already said for him, with a far better grace than he himself could have expressed it, by the English physician. He had, after great trouble of mind, hit upon the name of Taylor, as a safe and simple substitute for that other name to which alone my lady had a right. He told the Frenchman that this Mrs. Taylor was distantly related to him—that she had inherited the seeds of madness from her mother, as indeed Dr. Mosgrave had informed Monsieur Val; and that she had shown some fearful tokens of the lurking taint that was latent in her mind; but that she was not to be called "mad." He begged that she might be treated with all tenderness and compassion; that she might receive all reasonable indulgences; but he impressed upon Monsieur Val, that under no circumstances was she to be permitted to leave the house and grounds without the protection of some reliable person, who should be answerable for her safe keeping. He had only one other point to urge, and that was, that Monsieur Val, who, as he had understood, was himself a Protestant—the doctor bowed—would make arrangements with some kind and benevolent Protestant clergyman, through whom spiritual advice and consolation might be secured for the invalid lady; who had especial need, Robert added, gravely, of such advantages.

This—with all necessary arrangements as to pecuniary matters, which were to be settled from time to time between Mr. Audley and the doctor, unassisted by any agents whatever—was the extent of the conversation between the two men, and occupied about a quarter of an hour. My lady sat in the same attitude when they re-entered the bedchamber in which they had left her, with her ringed hands still clasped over her face.

Robert bent over her to whisper in her ear.

"Your name is Madame Taylor here," he said. "I do not think you would wish to be known by your real name."

She only shook her head in answer to him, and did not even remove her hands from over her face.

"Madame will have an attendant entirely devoted to her service," said Monsieur Val. "Madame will have all her wishes obeyed; her *reasonable* wishes, but that goes without saying," Monsieur adds, with a quaint shrug. "Every effort will be made to render Madame's sojourn at Villebrumeuse agreeable, and as much profitable as agreeable. The inmates dine

together when it is wished. I dine with the inmates, sometimes; my subordinate, a clever and a worthy man, always. I reside with my wife and children in a little pavilion in the grounds; my subordinate resides in the establishment. Madame may rely upon our utmost efforts being exerted to ensure her comfort."

Monsieur is saying a great deal more to the same effect, rubbing his hands and beaming radiantly upon Robert and his charge, when Madame rises suddenly, erect and furious, and dropping her jewelled fingers from before her face, tells him to hold his tongue.

"Leave me alone with the man who has brought me here," she cried between her set teeth. "Leave me!"

She points to the door with a sharp, imperious gesture; so rapid that the silken drapery about her arm makes a swooping sound as she lifts her hand. The sibilant French syllables hiss through her teeth as she utters them, and seem better fitted to her mood and to herself than the familiar English she has spoken hitherto.

The French doctor shrugs his shoulders as he goes out into the dark lobby, and mutters something about a "beautiful devil," and a gesture worthy of "the Mars." My lady walked with a rapid footstep to the door between the bedchamber and the saloon; closed it, and with the handle of the door still in her hand, turned and looked at Robert Audley.

"You have brought me to my grave, Mr. Audley," she cried; "you have used your power basely and cruelly, and have brought me to a living grave."

"I have done that which I thought just to others and merciful to you," Robert answered, quietly. "I should have been a traitor to society had I suffered you to remain at liberty after—after the disappearance of George Talboys and the fire at the Castle Inn. I have brought you to a place in which you will be kindly treated by people who have no knowledge of your story—no power to taunt or to reproach you. You will lead a quiet and peaceful life, my lady; such a life as many a good and holy woman in this catholic country freely takes upon herself, and happily endures unto the end. The solitude of your existence in this place will be no greater than that of a king's daughter, who, flying from the evil of the time, was glad to take shelter in a house as tranquil as this. Surely it is a small atonement which I ask you to

render for your sins, a light penance which I call upon you to perform. Live here and repent; nobody will assail you, nobody will torment you. I only say to you, repent!"

"I *cannot!*" cried my lady, pushing her hair fiercely from her white forehead, and fixing her dilated eyes upon Robert Audley, "I *cannot!* Has my beauty brought me to *this?* Have I plotted and schemed to shield myself, and laid awake in the long deadly nights trembling to think of my dangers, for *this?* I had better have given up at once, since *this* was to be the end. I had better have yielded to the curse that was upon me, and given up when George Talboys first came back to England."

She plucked at the feathery golden curls as if she would have torn them from her head. It had served her so little after all, that gloriously glittering hair; that beautiful nimbus of yellow light that had contrasted so exquisitely with the melting azure of her eyes. She hated herself and her beauty.

"I would laugh at you and defy you, if I dared," she cried; "I would kill myself and defy you, if I dared. But I am a poor, pitiful coward, and have been so from the first. Afraid of my mother's horrible inheritance; afraid of poverty; afraid of George Talboys; afraid of *you*."

She was silent for a little while, but she still held her place by the door, as if determined to detain Robert as long as it was her pleasure to do so.

"Do you know what I am thinking of?" she said, presently. "Do you know what I am thinking of, as I look at you in the dim light of this room? I am thinking of the day upon which George Talboys—disappeared."

Robert started as she mentioned the name of his lost friend; his face turned pale in the dusky light, and his breathing grew quicker and louder.

"He was standing opposite me as you are standing now," continued my lady. "You said that you would raze the old house to the ground; that you would root up every tree in the gardens to find your dead friend. You would have had no need to do so much: the body of George Talboys lies at the bottom of the old well, in the shrubbery beyond the lime-walk."

Robert Audley flung up his hands and clasped them above his head, with one loud cry of horror.

"Oh, my God!" he said, after a dreadful pause; "have all the ghastly things

that I have thought prepared me so little for the ghastly truth, that it should come upon me like this at last?"

"He came to me in the lime-walk," resumed my lady, in the same hard, dogged tone as that in which she had confessed the wicked story of her life. "I knew that he would come, and I had prepared myself, as well as I could, to meet him. I was determined to bribe him, to cajole him, to defy him; to do anything sooner than abandon the wealth and the position I had won, and go back to my old life. He came, and he reproached me for the conspiracy at Ventnor. He declared that so long as he lived he would never forgive me for the lie that had broken his heart. He told me that I had plucked his heart out of his breast and trampled upon it; and that he had now no heart in which to feel one sentiment of mercy for me. That he would have forgiven me any wrong upon earth, but that one deliberate and passionless wrong that I had done him. He said this and a great deal more, and he told me that no power on earth should turn him from his purpose, which was to take me to the man I had deceived, and make me tell my wicked story. He did not know the hidden taint that I had sucked in with my mother's milk. He did not know that it was possible to drive me mad. He goaded me as you have goaded me; he was as merciless as you have been merciless. We were in the shrubbery at the end of the lime-walk. I was seated upon the broken masonry at the mouth of the well. George Talboys was leaning upon the disused windlass, in which the rusty iron spindle rattled loosely whenever he shifted his position. I rose at last and turned upon him to defy him, as I had determined to defy him at the worst. I told him that if he denounced me to Sir Michael, I would declare him to be a madman or a liar, and I defied him to convince the man who loved me—blindly, as I told him—that he had any claim to me. I was going to leave him after having told him this, when he caught me by the wrist and detained me by force. You saw the bruises that his fingers made upon my wrist and noticed them, and did not believe the account I gave of them. I could see that, Mr. Robert Audley, and I saw that you were a person I should have to fear."

She paused, as if she had expected Robert to speak; but he stood silent and motionless waiting for the end.

"George Talboys treated me as you

treated me," she said, presently. "He swore that if there was but one witness of my identity, and that witness was removed from Audley Court by the width of the whole earth, he would bring him there to swear to my identity, and to denounce me. It was then that I was mad. It was then that I drew the loose iron spindle from the shrunken wood, and saw my first husband sink with one horrible cry into the black mouth of the well. There is a legend of its enormous depth. I do not know how deep it is. It is dry, I suppose, for I heard no splash, only a dull thud. I looked down and I saw nothing but black emptiness. I knelt down and listened, but the cry was not repeated, though I waited for nearly a quarter of an hour—God knows how long it seemed to me!—by the mouth of the well."

Robert Audley uttered no word of horror when the story was finished. He moved a little nearer towards the door against which Helen Talboys stood. Had there been any other means of exit from the room, he would gladly have availed himself of it. He shrunk from even a momentary contact with this creature.

"Let me pass you, if you please," he said, in an icy voice.

"You see I do not fear to make my confession to you," said Helen Talboys; "for two reasons. The first is, that you dare not use it against me, because you know it would kill your uncle to see me in a criminal dock; the second is, that the law could pronounce no worse sentence than this—a life-long imprisonment in a madhouse. You see I do not thank you for your mercy, Mr. Robert Audley, for I know exactly what it is worth."

She moved away from the door, and Robert passed her, without a word, without a look.

Half an hour afterwards he was in one of the principal hotels at Villebrumeuse, sitting at a neatly-ordered supper-table, with no power to eat; with no power to distract his mind, even for a moment, from the image of that lost friend who had been treacherously murdered in the thicket at Audley Court.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

GHOST-HAUNTED.

No feverish sleeper travelling in a strange dream ever looked out more wonderingly upon a world that seemed unreal than

Robert Audley, as he stared absently at the flat swamps and dismal poplars between Villebrumeuse and Brussels. Could it be that he was returning to his uncle's house without the woman who had reigned in it for nearly two years as queen and mistress? He felt as if he had carried off my lady, and had made away with her secretly and darkly, and must now render up an account to Sir Michael of the fate of that woman, whom the baronet had so dearly loved.

"What shall I tell him?" he thought. "Shall I tell the truth—the horrible, ghastly truth? No; that would be too cruel. His generous spirit would sink under the hideous revelation. Yet, in his ignorance of the extent of this wretched woman's wickedness, he may think, perhaps, that I have been hard with her."

Brooding thus, Mr. Robert Audley absently watched the cheerless landscape from his seat in the shabby *coupé* of the diligence, and thought how great a leaf had been torn out of his life, now that the dark story of George Talboys was finished.

What had he to do next? A crowd of horrible thoughts rushed into his mind as he remembered the story that he had heard from the white lips of Helen Talboys. His friend—his murdered friend—lay hidden amongst the mouldering ruins of the old well at Audley Court. He had lain there for six long months, unburied, unknown; hidden in the darkness of the old convent well. What was to be done?

To institute a search for the remains of the murdered man was to inevitably bring about a coroner's inquest. Should such an inquest be held, it was next to impossible that the history of my lady's crime could fail to be brought to light. To prove that George Talboys met with his death at Audley Court was to prove almost as surely that my lady had been the instrument of that mysterious death; for the young man had been known to follow her into the lime-walk upon the day of his disappearance.

"My God!" Robert exclaimed, as the full horror of this position became evident to him; "is my friend to rest in his unhallowed burial-place because I have condoned the offences of the woman who murdered him?"

He felt that there was no way out of this difficulty. Sometimes he thought that it little mattered to his dead friend whether he lay entombed beneath a marble monument, whose workmanship should be

the wonder of the universe, or in that obscure hiding-place in the thicket at Audley Court. At another time he would be seized with a sudden horror at the wrong that had been done to the murdered man, and would fain have travelled even more rapidly than the express between Brussels and Paris could carry him, in his eagerness to reach the end of his journey, that he might set right this cruel wrong.

He was in London at dusk on the second day after that on which he had left Audley Court, and he drove straight to the Clarendon, to inquire after his uncle. He had no intention of seeing Sir Michael, as he had not yet determined how much or how little he should tell him, but he was very anxious to ascertain how the old man had sustained the cruel shock he had so lately endured.

"I will see Alicia," he thought; "she will tell me all about her father. It is only two days since he left Audley. I can scarcely expect to hear of any favourable change."

But Mr. Audley was not destined to see his cousin that evening, for the servants at the Clarendon told him that Sir Michael and his daughter had left by the morning mail for Paris, on their way to Vienna.

Robert was very well pleased to receive this intelligence: it afforded him a welcome respite, for it would be decidedly better to tell the baronet nothing of his guilty wife until he returned to England, with his health unimpaired and his spirits re-established, it was to be hoped.

Mr. Audley drove to the Temple. The chambers which had seemed dreary to him ever since the disappearance of George Talboys, were doubly so to-night. For that which had been only a dark suspicion had now become a horrible certainty. There was no longer room for the palest ray, the most transitory glimmer of hope. His worst terrors had been too well founded.

George Talboys had been cruelly and treacherously murdered by the wife he had loved and mourned.

There were three letters waiting for Mr. Audley at his chambers. One was from Sir Michael, and another from Alicia. The third was addressed in a hand the young barrister knew only too well, though he had seen it but once before. His face flushed redly at the sight of the superscription, and he took the letter in his hand, carefully and tenderly, as if it

had been a living thing, and sentient to his touch. He turned it over and over in his hands, looking at the crest upon the envelope, at the post-mark, at the colour of the paper, and then put it into the bosom of his waistcoat with a strange smile upon his face.

"What a wretched and unconscionable fool I am!" he thought. "Have I laughed at the follies of weak men all my life, and am I to be more foolish than the weakest of them at last? The beautiful brown-eyed creature! Why did I ever see her? Why did my relentless Nemesis ever point the way to that dreary house in Dorsetshire?"

He opened the two first letters. He was foolish enough to keep the last for a delicious morsel—a fairy-like desert after the commonplace substantialities of a dinner.

Alicia's letter told him that Sir Michael had borne his agony with such a persevering tranquillity that she had become at last far more alarmed by his patient calmness than by any stormy manifestation of despair. In this difficulty she had secretly called upon the physician who attended the Audley household in any cases of serious illness, and had requested this gentleman to pay Sir Michael an apparently accidental visit. He had done so, and after stopping half an hour with the baronet, had told Alicia that there was no present danger of any serious consequence from this quiet grief, but that it was necessary that every effort should be made to arouse Sir Michael, and to force him, however unwillingly, into action.

Alicia had immediately acted upon this advice, had resumed her old empire as a spoiled child, and reminded her father of a promise he had made of taking her through Germany. With considerable difficulty, she had induced him to consent to fulfilling this old promise, and having once gained her point, she had contrived that they should leave England as soon as it was possible to do so, and she told Robert, in conclusion, that she would not bring her father back to his old house until she had taught him to forget the sorrows associated with it.

The baronet's letter was very brief. It contained half a dozen blank cheques on Sir Michael Audley's London bankers.

"You will require money, my dear Robert," he wrote, "for such arrangements as you may think fit to make for the future comfort of the person I committed to your care. I need scarcely tell

you that those arrangements cannot be too liberal. But perhaps it is as well that I should tell you now, for the first and only time, that it is my earnest wish never again to hear that person's name. I have no wish to be told the nature of the arrangements you may make for her. I am sure that you will act conscientiously and mercifully. I seek to know no more. Whenever you want money, you will draw upon me for any sums that you may require; but you will have no occasion to tell me for whose use you want that money."

Robert Audley breathed a long sigh of relief as he folded this letter. It released him from a duty which it would have been most painful for him to perform, and it for ever decided his course of action with regard to the murdered man.

George Talboys must lie at peace in his unknown grave, and Sir Michael Audley must never learn that the woman he had loved bore the red brand of murder on her soul.

Robert had only the third letter to open—the letter which he had placed in his bosom while he read the others; he tore open the envelope, handling it carefully and tenderly as he had done before.

The letter was as brief as Sir Michael's. It contained only these few lines:—

"Dear Mr. Audley—

"The rector of this place has been twice to see Marks, the man you saved in the fire at the Castle Inn. He lies in a very precarious state at his mother's cottage, near Audley Court, and is not expected to live many days. His wife is attending him, and both he and she have expressed a most earnest desire that you should see him before he dies. Pray come without delay.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CLARA TALBOYS.

"Mount Stanning Rectory, March 6."

Robert Audley folded this letter very reverently, and replaced it underneath that part of his waistcoat which might be supposed to cover the region of his heart. Having done this, he seated himself in his favourite arm-chair, filled and lighted a pipe, and smoked it out, staring reflectively at the fire as long as his tobacco lasted. The lazy light that glimmered in his handsome grey eyes told of a dreamy reverie that could have scarcely been either gloomy or unpleasant. His thoughts wandered away upon the blue

clouds of hazy tobacco smoke, and carried him into a bright region of unrealities, in which there was neither death nor trouble, grief nor shame; only himself and Clara Talboys in a world that was made all their own by the great omnipotence of their loves.

It was not till the last shred of pale Turkish tobacco had been consumed, and the grey ashes knocked out upon the top-most bar of the grate, that this pleasant dream floated off into the great storehouse in which the visions of things that never have been and never are to be, are kept locked and guarded by some stern enchanter, who only turns the keys now and then and opens the door of his treasure-house a little way for the brief delight of mankind. But the dream fled, and the heavy burden of dismal realities fell again upon Robert's shoulders, more tenacious than any old man of the sea. "What can that man Marks want with me?" thought the barrister. "He is afraid to die until he has made a confession, perhaps. He wishes to tell me that which I know already—the story of my lady's crime. I knew that he was in the secret. I was sure of it even upon the night on which I first saw him. He knew the secret, and he traded on it."

Robert Audley shrank strangely from returning to Essex. How should he meet Clara Talboys now that he knew the secret of her brother's fate. How many lies he should have to tell, or how much equivocation he must use in order to keep the truth from her. Yet would there be any mercy in telling her that horrible story, the knowledge of which must cast a blight upon her youth, and blot out every hope she had ever secretly cherished. He knew by his own experience how possible it was to hope against hope, and to hope unconsciously; and he could not bear that her heart should be crushed as his had been by the knowledge of the truth. "Better that she should hope vainly to the last," he thought; "better that she should go through life seeking the clue to her lost brother's fate, than that I should give that clue into her hands, and say, 'Our worst fears are realized. The brother you loved has been foully murdered in the early promise of his youth.'"

But Clara Talboys had written to him imploring him to return to Essex without delay. Could he refuse to do her bidding, however painful its accomplishment might be. And again, the man was dying, perhaps, and had implored to see him. Would

it not be cruel to refuse to go, to delay an hour unnecessarily? He looked at his watch. It wanted only five minutes to nine. There was no train to Audley after the Ipswich mail, which left London at half-past eight; but there was a train that left Shoreditch at eleven, and stopped at Brentwood between twelve and one. Robert decided upon going by this train, and walking the distance between Brentwood and Audley, which was upwards of six miles.

He had a long time to wait before it would be necessary to leave the Temple on his way to Shoreditch, and he sat brooding darkly over the fire, and wondering at the strange events which had filled his life within the last year and a half, coming like angry shadows between his lazy inclinations and himself, and investing him with purposes that were not his own.

"Good heavens!" he thought, as he smoked his second pipe; "how can I believe that it was I who used to lounge all day in this easy-chair reading Paul de Kock, and smoking mild Turkish; who used to drop in at half-price to stand amongst the press men at the back of the boxes, and see a new burlesque, and finish the evening with the "Chough and Crow," and chops and pale ale at Evans's. Was it I to whom life was such an easy merry-go-round? Was it I who was one of the boys who sit at ease upon the wooden horses, while other boys run barefoot in the mud, and work their hardest in the hope of a ride when their work is done? Heaven knows I have learnt the business of life since then; and now I must needs fall in love, and swell the tragic chorus which is always being sung by the poor addition of my pitiful sighs and groans. Clara Talboys! Clara Talboys! Is there any merciful smile latent beneath the earnest light of your brown eyes? What would you say to me if I told you that I love you as earnestly and truly as I have mourned for your brother's fate—that the new strength and purpose of my life, which has grown out of my friendship for the murdered man, grows even stronger as it turns to you, and changes me until I wonder at myself? What would she say to me? Ah! Heaven knows. If she happened to like the colour of my hair, or the tone of my voice, she might listen to me, perhaps. But would she hear me any more because I love her truly and purely; because I would be constant, and honest, and faithful to her? Not she! These things might move her, perhaps, to

be a little pitiful to me; but they would move her no more! If a girl with freckles and white eyelashes adored me, I should only think her a nuisance; but if Clara Talboys had a fancy to trample upon my uncouth person, I should think she did me a favour. I hope poor little Alicia may pick up with some fair-haired Saxon in the course of her travels. I hope—" His thoughts wandered away wearily, and lost themselves. How could he hope for anything, or think of anything, while the memory of his dead friend's unburied body haunted him like a horrible spectre? He remembered a story—a morbid, hideous, yet delicious story, which had once pleasantly congealed his blood on a social winter's evening—the story of a man, a monomaniac, perhaps, who had been haunted at every turn by the image of an unburied kinsman who *could* not rest in his unhallowed hiding-place. What if that dreadful story had its double in reality? What if he were henceforth to be haunted by the phantom of murdered George Talboys?

He pushed his hair away from his face with both his hands, and looked rather nervously around the snug little apartment. There were lurking shadows in the corners of the room that he scarcely liked. The door opening into his little dressing-room was ajar; he got up to shut it, and turned the key in the lock with a sharp click.

"I haven't read Alexandre Dumas and Wilkie Collins for nothing," he muttered. "I'm up to their tricks, sneaking in at doors behind a fellow's back, and flattening their white faces against windowpanes, and making themselves all eyes in the twilight. It's a strange thing that your generous-hearted fellow, who never did a shabby thing in his life, is capable of any meanness the moment he becomes a ghost. I'll have the gas laid on to-morrow, and engage Mrs. Malony's eldest son to sleep under the letter-box in the lobby. The youth plays popular melodies upon a piece of tissue paper and a small-tooth comb, and it will be quite pleasant company."

Mr. Audley walked wearily up and down the room, trying to get rid of the time. It was no use leaving the Temple until ten o'clock, and even then he would be sure to reach the station half an hour too early. He was tired of smoking. The soothing narcotic influence might be pleasant enough in itself, but the man must be of a singularly unsocial disposi-

tion who does not, after half a dozen lonely pipes, feel the need of some friendly companion, at whom he can stare dreamily athwart the pale grey mists, and who will stare kindly back at him in return. Do not think that Robert Audley was without friends, because he so often found himself alone in his quiet chambers. The solemn purpose which had taken so powerful a hold upon his careless life had separated him from old associations, and it was for this reason that he was alone. He had dropped away from his old friends. How could he sit amongst them, at social wine parties, perhaps, or at pleasant little dinners, that were washed down with Nonpareil and Chambertin, Pomard and Champagne? How could he sit amongst them, listening to their careless talk of politics and opera, literature and racing, theatres and science, scandal and theology, and yet carry in his mind the horrible burden of those dark terrors and suspicions that were with him by day and night? He could not do it! He had shrunk from these men as if he had, indeed, been a detective police officer, stained with vile associations, and unfit company for honest gentlemen. He had drawn himself away from all familiar haunts, and had shut himself in his lonely rooms with the perpetual trouble of his mind for his sole companion, until he had grown as nervous as habitual solitude will eventually make the strongest and the wisest man, however he may vaunt himself of his strength and wisdom.

The clock of the Temple Church and the clocks of St. Dunstan's, St. Clement's Danes, and a crowd of other churches, whose steeples uprear themselves above the house-tops by the river, struck ten at last, and Mr. Audley, who had put on his hat and overcoat nearly half an hour before, let himself out of the little lobby, and locked his door behind him. He mentally reiterated his determination to engage "Parthrick," as Mrs. Maloney's eldest son was called by his devoted mother. The youth should enter upon his functions the very next night after, and if the ghost of hapless George Talboys should invade these gloomy apartments, the phantom must make its way across Patrick's body before it could reach the inner chamber in which the proprietor of the premises slept.

Do not laugh at poor Robert because he grew hypochondriacal, after hearing the horrible story of his friend's death. There is nothing so delicate, so fragile,

as that invisible balance upon which the mind is always trembling. Mad to-day and sane to-morrow.

Who can forget that almost terrible picture of Dr. Samuel Johnson? The awful disputant of the club-room, solemn, ponderous, severe, and merciless, the admiration and the terror of humble Bozzy, the stern monitor of gentle Oliver, the friend of Garrick and Reynolds to-night: and before to-morrow sunset a weak miserable old man, discovered by good Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, kneeling upon the floor of his lonely chamber, in an agony of childish terror and confusion, and praying to a merciful God for the preservation of his wits. I think the memory of that dreadful afternoon, and of the tender care he then received, should have taught the doctor to keep his hand steady at Streatham, when he took his bed-room candlestick, from which it was his habit to shower rivulets of molten wax upon the costly carpet of his beautiful protectress; and might have even had a more enduring effect, and taught him to be merciful, when the brewer's widow went mad in her turn, and married that dreadful creature, the Italian singer. Who has not been, or is not to be, mad in some lonely hour of life? Who is quite safe from the trembling of the balance?

Fleet-street was quiet and lonely at this late hour, and Robert Audley being in a ghost-seeing mood would have been scarcely astonished had he seen Johnson's set come roysterling westward in the lamp-light, or blind John Milton groping his way down the steps before Saint Bride's church.

Mr. Audley hailed a hansom at the corner of Farringdon-street, and was rattled rapidly away across tenantless Smithfield market, and into a labyrinth of dingy streets that brought him out upon the broad grandeur of Finsbury Pavement.

"Nobody ever saw a ghost in a hansom cab," Robert thought, "and even Dumas hasn't done *that* as yet. Not but that he's capable of doing it if the idea occurred to him. *Un revenant en siacre.* Upon my word, the title doesn't sound bad. The story would be something about a dismal gentleman, in black, who took the vehicle by the hour, and was contumacious upon the subject of fares, and beguiled the driver into lonely neighbourhoods, beyond the barriers, and made himself otherwise unpleasant."

The hansom rattled up the steep and

stony approach to the Shoreditch station, and deposited Robert at the doors of that unlovely temple. There were very few people going to travel by this midnight train, and Robert walked up and down the long wooden platform, reading the huge advertisements whose gaunt lettering looked wan and ghastly in the dim lamplight.

He had the carriage in which he sat all to himself. All to himself, did I say? Had he not lately summoned to his side that ghostly company which of all companionship is the most tenacious? The shadow of George Talboys pursued him, even in the comfortable first class carriage, and was behind him when he looked out of the window, and was yet far away ahead of him and the rushing engine, in that thicket towards which the train was speeding, by the side of the unhallowed hiding place in which the mortal remains of the dead man lay, neglected and uncared for.

"I must give my lost friend decent burial," Robert thought, as a chill wind swept across the flat landscape, and struck him with such frozen breath as might have emanated from the lips of the dead. "I must do it; or I shall die of some panic like this which has seized upon me to-night. I must do it; at any peril; at any cost. Even at the price of that revelation which will bring the mad woman back from her safe hiding-place, and place her in a criminal dock." He was glad when the train stopped at Brentwood at a few minutes after twelve. Only one other person got out at the little station,—a burly grazier, who had been to one of the theatres to see a tragedy. Country people always go to see tragedies. None of your flimsy vaudevilles for them. None of your pretty drawing-room, moderator lamp and French window pieces, with a confiding husband, a frivolous wife, and a smart lady's maid, who is always accommodating enough to dust the furniture and announce visitors; no such gauzy productions; but a good monumental five act tragedy, in which their ancestors have seen Garrick and Mrs. Abington, and in which they themselves can remember the O'Neil, the beautiful creature whose lovely neck and shoulders became suffused with a crimson glow of shame and indignation, when the actress was Mrs. Beverley, and insulted by Stukeley in her poverty and sorrow. I think our modern O'Neils scarcely feel their stage wrongs so keenly; or, per-

haps, those brightly indignant blushes of to-day struggle ineffectually against the new art of Madame Rachel, and are lost to the public beneath the lily purity of priceless enamel.

Robert Audley looked hopelessly about him as he left the pleasant town of Brentwood, and descended the lonely hill into the valley which lay between the town he had left behind him and that other hill, upon which that frail and dismal tenement—the Castle Inn—had so long struggled with its enemy, the wind, only to succumb at last, and to be shrivelled and consumed away like a withered leaf, by the alliance of that old adversary with a newer and a fiercer foe.

"It's a dreary walk," Mr. Audley said, as he looked along the smooth high road that lay before him, lonely as the track across a desert. "It's a dreary walk for a dismal wretch to take between twelve and one, upon a cheerless March night, with not so much moonlight in all the black sky as might serve to convince one of the existence of such a luminary. But I'm very glad I came," thought the barrister, "if this poor creature is dying, and really wishes to see me. I should have been a wretch had I held back. Besides, she wishes it; she wishes it; and what can I do but obey her, Heaven help me!"

He stopped by the wooden fence which surrounded the gardens of Mount Standing rector, and looked across a laurel hedge towards the lattice windows of that simple habitation. There was no glimmer of light in any one of these windows, and Mr. Audley was fain to go away, after having had no better satisfaction than such cold comfort as was to be obtained from a long lingering contemplation of the house that sheltered the one woman before whose invincible power the impregnable fortress of his heart had surrendered. Only a heap of blackened ruins stood upon the spot on which the Castle Inn had once done battle with the winds of Heaven. The cold night breezes had their way with the few fragments that the fire had left, and whirled them hither and thither as they would, scattering a shower of dust and cinders and crumbling morsels of charred wood upon Robert Audley as he passed.

It was half-past one o'clock when the night wanderer entered the village of Audley, and it was only there that he remembered that Clara Talboys had omitted to give him any direction by which he

might find the cottage in which Luke Marks lay.

"It was Dawson who recommended that the poor creature should be taken to his mother's cottage," Robert thought, by-and-by, "and I dare say, Dawson has attended him ever since the fire. He'll be able to tell me the way to the cottage."

Acting upon this idea, Mr. Audley stopped at the house in which Helen Talboys had lived before her second marriage. The door of the little surgery was ajar, and there was a light burning within. Robert pushed the door open and peeped in. The surgeon was standing at the mahogany counter, mixing a draught in a glass measure, with his hat close beside him. Late as it was, he had evidently only just come in. The harmonious snoring of his assistant sounded from a little room within the surgery.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Mr. Dawson," Robert said, apologetically, as the surgeon looked up and recognised him, "but I have come down to see Marks, who, I hear, is in a very bad way, and I want you to tell me the way to his mother's cottage."

"I'll show you the way, Mr. Audley," answered the surgeon, "I am going there this minute."

"The man is very bad then?"

"So bad that he can be no worse. The change that can happen is that change which will take him beyond the reach of any earthly suffering."

"Strange!" exclaimed Robert. "He did not appear to be much burnt."

"He was not much burnt. Had he

been, I should never have recommended his being removed from Mount Stanning. It is the shock that has done the business. His health had been long undermined by habits of intoxication, and has completely given way under the sudden terror of that night. He has been in a raging fever for the last two days; but to-night he is much calmer, and I'm afraid, before to-morrow night, we shall have seen the last of him."

"He has asked to see me, I am told," said Mr. Audley.

"Yes," answered the surgeon, carelessly. "A sick man's fancy, no doubt. You dragged him out of the house, and did your best to save his life. I dare say, rough and boorish as the poor fellow is, he thinks a good deal of that."

They had left the surgery, the door of which Mr. Dawson had locked behind him. There was money in the till, perhaps, for surely the village apothecary could not have feared that the most daring housebreaker would imperil his liberty in the pursuit of blue pill and colocynth, or salts and senna.

The surgeon led the way along the silent street, and presently turned into a lane at the end of which Robert Audley saw the wan glimmer of a light. A light which told of the watch that is kept by the sick and dying; a pale, melancholy light, which always has a dismal aspect when looked upon in this silent hour betwixt night and morning. It shone from the window of the cottage in which Luke Marks lay, watched by his wife and mother.

(To be continued.)

NINA GREY; OR, THE SUNBEAM.

"Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
She gleam'd like sunshine on our sight."

"HAVE you heard what a poor match Nina Grey is going to make?" asked my neighbour, Mrs. Willis, of me, during a morning visit some years ago—"And such a nice girl, too! it is really quite a pity. She might have done so much better for herself, too; for, to my knowledge, Sir Marmaduke Rollestane was desperately in love with her last winter; but I heard that she made no more account of him than if he had been the lieutenant of some marching regiment. It is quite unaccountable," added Mrs. Willis, with a sigh, "how imprudent girls are in their early youth: they don't know what is best for them, poor things, till it is too late."

I seized the first pause in Mrs. Willis's discourse to tell her that a report had reached me of Nina's engagement, and that I expected soon to know more about it, as I had just accepted an invitation to pass a little time in London with General and Mrs. Grey, who were old acquaintances of mine.

About a week after this conversation had taken place I found myself in Chester-square, enjoying familiar talk with General and Mrs. Grey about bygone days, and forming acquaintance with the pleasant young faces—as yet almost strange to me—of those who were gathered around their fireside. Amongst them the eldest daughter, Nina, naturally attracted my chief attention; for there is an instinctive feeling of interest awakened in each woman's heart—a feeling often ridiculed, and sometimes perverted, yet not the less a true and right instinct—of deep interest in the fate of each of her sister-kind who is about to enter the critical, untried phase of married life.

Nina was one of those child-like beings, who, without any positive attractions, seem to create around them an atmosphere of kindness and love. Her features were irregular, but their expression was so full of winning gentleness, and yet of joyous, intelligent vivacity, that one's eye rested upon them with far more satisfaction than upon many a lovelier countenance. Nina was pre-eminently an accomplished woman: for, whether it was the embroidery frame or the sketch-book—whether it was a fantasia of Thal-

berg's or some touching melody of the sister isle, her fairy fingers excelled alike in all; and her voice could express alike, in its flexible modulation, all the graver or more joyous emotions of the human heart. Nor was she deficient in the more intellectual parts of education: she loved the study of languages, and gave a stated portion of her time to the best literature of the day. Nina's highest praise, however, was, that when at any time her aid was needed to help or cheer another, she would abandon her most favourite pursuit with so blythe an air that it was hard to realize that she made any sacrifice in doing so. So genial was her temper, and so bright her disposition, that her father was often wont, in playful mood, to call her "the sunbeam of the house." After having passed some days under the same roof with Nina, I asked myself whether it were possible to detect in her any symptom of the latent evil which dwells too surely within each human heart.

Yes; Nina had her foibles: she was fond of dress, and she was, perhaps, over-sensitive about the good opinion of others; but even those failings "leaned to virtue's side;" for her love of dress seemed to arise from a desire to please, rather than to shine; and no shade, either of vanity or of envy, was ever seen to flit across her expressive features. Her sensitive desire for the good opinion of others seemed, too, to spring from the same kindly source that made her look upon "the angel side" of even the most ordinary mortals; in fact, she could not bear to think ill of anybody. No marvel, then, that she desired to be viewed through the same kindly medium by those around her.

Such was Nina Grey:—

"A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

It was an evening or two after my arrival at General Grey's. The young people were preparing for some little social gathering at a friend's house; and Mrs. Grey took advantage of their absence to acquaint me with Nina's engage-

ment to Mr. Greville, a young barrister of great promise, she informed me, but of such slender means that her father had long withheld his consent to their union. "But she is so much attached to him, poor child!" added Mrs. Grey, with a sigh, "that I have persuaded the General to give way; and we hope that Harry Greville will sooner or later make his way in the world."

"Humph!" muttered the General, who, seated in his easy-chair by the fireside, had seemed to be so engrossed in the columns of the *Times* that we did not imagine he had heard a word of our conversation.

Just then the door opened, and Nina entered, *en grande tenue*, for her evening engagement. Her slight form floated in a maze of crinoline, white sarsenet, and tarletan, whose ample folds waved like a soft white cloud around her. The General, looking up over his spectacles at Nina, said, drily; "Pray, my dear, how many of those airy garments do you mean to dispense with when you are the wife of a man with 300*l.* a-year?"

"Oh, papa!" replied Nina, colouring deeply, "you know that I mean to be very prudent."

"Prudent, indeed," re-echoed the General, "I do not think that you and Greville have a grain of prudence between you."

Nina's eyes kindled with displeasure on hearing this attack upon her absent lover; but, in a moment, her better nature prevailed, and coming close to her father's chair, she gave him a kiss, saying, "Well, dear papa, there is no time left for you to scold your little Nina now, as the carriage is at the door; so I must say good night." The General's features relaxed into their wonted kindness, and wishing his children a pleasant evening, he drew the lamp closer to him and resumed his reading. He was, however, soon interrupted by his wife, who said to him that he was too severe on poor Nina, who was, she thought, quite as prudent as other girls; and "you do not know, my dear," added she, gravely, "how sensibly she speaks of the difficulties that await her. It was only yesterday that she was talking over the matter with me, and said that money was of very little importance to her, for she would rather live in a cottage with Harry Greville than in a palace with any other man."

"What nonsense you women do talk!"

cried out the old General, rather testily; "a cottage, indeed! She is picturing to herself, no doubt, some charming little home covered with roses and honeysuckles, whereas the plain fact is, that she will probably be in a dirty lodging in some back street of the city."

"Oh, pray don't talk so!" interrupted Mrs. Grey; "I cannot bear the idea of my darling Nina living in such a place. You forget that Mr. Greville has good expectations."

"Hang *expectations!*" replied the General, who was a plain practical man, quite opposed to the feminine idealities of his wife and daughter. "I would not give 50*l.* for all his expectations. 'One bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' But we will say no more about it now. You and the girl have settled all your own way; so now we must only make the best of it."

Poor Mrs. Grey was rather disconcerted by the gloomy view her husband took of Nina's prospects; but she had the good sense to choose some other topic of conversation, in which the General gradually joined, and the evening passed off more cheerfully than might have been expected.

On the ensuing day I made acquaintance with Mr. Greville, and found him, as Mrs. Grey had said, full of promise. There was a frank kindness in his manner, an expression of truth and intelligence in his eye, which at once won my favourable regard; and I felt that he was just the sort of person on whom a girl of Nina's disposition would be likely to rest with entire trust and affection. The financial part of their difficulties, however, was not easily to be overcome; for Nina, with comparatively little fortune, either in possession or expectancy, had been accustomed to a liberal expenditure in her father's house, and she had no idea of the value of money; nor was her fond and amiable mother capable of guiding her into a more practical understanding of the matter. During my visit, which lasted above a fortnight, I was often consulted in the purchase of Nina's *trousseau*, many articles of which were far better suited to the bride of a man having 3000*l.* than 300*l.* a year. On one occasion, where my opinion was pointedly asked, I ventured to hint that certain elegant and expensive trifles might be dispensed with, and the money more advantageously spent in useful things. Nina looked a little disappointed, and her mother observed that every one had such things when they were

going to be married, and that people might suppose her daughter was going to wed a pauper if her *trousseau* was deficient in those minor elegancies of bridal attire. This objection was of course unanswerable, and I found that it was only expected of me to admire and approve of the good taste displayed by Mrs. Grey and her daughter in the purchases they made. This was a tribute easily and readily paid; and in the more sober hours of our intercourse I had the pleasure to perceive that, with all her appreciation of artistic beauty, Nina's heart was conversant with far higher thoughts and purposes than those which belong to the mere amenities of life; and I felt satisfied that even the lesser mistakes of her girlish days would result in the ripening of her character, and in the sober happiness of her life-long lot.

I was not suffered to depart from Chester-square without promising to return thither previous to the great event of Nina's life. Accordingly, a few months later I found myself once more beneath the hospitable roof of my friends, where I received a cordial welcome from the bride elect, who looked very bright and happy; and yet there was a shade of sadness fleeting ever and anon over her expressive countenance, and revealing that hidden struggle which, even under the happiest circumstances of life, must be felt on abandoning for ever the parental home; on yielding up the protection of a father's care, and the tender watchfulness of a mother's love.

The whole household was engrossed in preparations for the morrow, and I found that my society was needed most by the worthy General, who, having no part in these domestic preparations, had the more leisure for anxious thoughts about his daughter, and for unquiet regret at losing her society. "I do not know what we shall do without Nina," he was saying to me in a somewhat querulous tone, when she entered the library where we were sitting, and, approaching her father with a smile, said, "Look, papa, what a beautiful present dear Henry has just brought me!" exhibiting at the same time to her father's view a very tasteful, though not expensive suite of ornaments.

"Very pretty indeed," replied the General; "but it would be better if he had kept the money to pay for bread and butter by and-bye." The words were far more ungracious than the look by which they were accompanied, but poor Nina

felt pained and disappointed. Large tear-drops trembled in her eyes. She could not bear that Henry should be supposed capable of aught that was imprudent or unwise. The General saw her discomposure, and drawing her to his side, kissed her fondly, saying, "Well, don't fret, little woman; you must only fall back upon your old father whenever your purse is getting low."

"Dear, dear papa," replied Nina, stroking back her father's grey hairs, and looking earnestly in his face, "I wish you were more hopeful about your little Nina's future happiness." Just at this moment Henry Greville entered the room, and fearful, apparently, lest any difference might arise between her father and lover, she quickly changed the subject of conversation.

The next morning arose with all its treasure of hopes and fears, its trembling joys and its fond regrets; for when in human life did any true sunshine ever come without bringing a shadow in its track?

Nina, despite her irregularity of feature, looked really lovely as she stood before the altar, half-veiled in the delicate folds of Limerick lace which were confined around her brow by the time-honoured wreath of orange-blossoms. Her dress was of the richest white silk, trimmed with deep flounces of lace to correspond with her veil. It might, perhaps, have been deemed a somewhat too costly attire for the bride of a "briefless barrister;" but even the General was not disposed on the eventful day to criticise his daughter's expenditure, and he gazed upon her with fond affection, intent only upon the thought, how precious was the treasure he was about to resign to another's keeping. Nina's three younger sisters, together with two youthful sisters of Henry Greville's, and a favourite cousin, clustered around her in the cerulean blue of their maid-of-honour's attire; and her father and mother stood near her, as if to extend to the latest moment of her maiden life the fond shield of their parental care.

When her hand was placed within that of Henry Greville, a gentle blush stole over her features, and some slight tremulousness might be detected in her utterance, whilst with a low, sweet voice she repeated the solemn vows of obedience and of love. Scarcely could one gaze at the bridegroom to whom those vows were pledged, without feeling assured that he was worthy of all her love. Truth and

kindness seemed to beam out of the intelligent countenance of Henry Greville as he stood beside her, whom he was now bound to love and protect during the remainder of their wedded life. My eye rested with affectionate interest upon the young couple as they walked down the aisle at the conclusion of the ceremony, and never did a more perfect picture of bridal happiness meet my gaze. The whole of *his* bearing bespoke a manly self-dependence, mingled with the expression of the deepest happiness; whilst *she* seemed to rest upon his arm with the entire confidence of a woman's love.

Our social gathering around the bridal breakfast-table in Chester-square had all the costly elegance of modern life and the heartiness of a bygone era, for the General had recovered his spirits, and gave joyous toasts, which were duly responded to by some of the younger members of the circle. But the moment of parting came at last; and as Nina, clad in a light grey silk dress and straw bonnet, threw herself into her father's arms, his firmness gave way, and with a faltering voice he said, "God bless you, my child, and make you as good a wife as you have been a daughter." Nina's last embrace was reserved for her mother, whose fond regret at this parting from her daughter was only betrayed by the tremor of her lips and the pallor of her countenance. I heard her whisper to Henry Greville on taking leave of him—

"You will make her happy?"

"With God's help I will," was his firm and prompt reply.

Such was Nina Grey's wedding-day! a day alike of sunshine and of hope; for, although no brilliant prospects lay before the bridal pair, yet one could not the less feel assured that a union like theirs, founded on affection and sustained by principle, could not fail of being crowned with the best and purest blessings of domestic life.

Some of my readers, perchance, may wish to know whether these pleasant hopes have been realized or not; I will invite them, therefore, to accompany me in one or two passing visits, which will afford us a glimpse of our friend Nina in her married life.

It was nearly two years after her wedding day that I called to see Nina Greville, who was then residing in a dull street in the unfashionable neighbourhood of Queen's-square. On approaching the door, I was reminded of the General's pro-

phecy about his daughter's future abode, for the house in which she dwelt was unmistakeably a lodging-house, and as I ascended the gloomy staircase, I wondered how Nina had borne her transition from the elegances of home to this uninviting residence. My doubt was quickly solved as I entered her drawing-room, and beheld Nina looking more radiant than ever, as she rose up from the sofa to welcome me with a lovely infant in her arms. There was a brightness in her smile, a joyousness in her manner that bespoke her freedom from all worldly cares and perplexities. She spoke without reserve of their comparatively straitened circumstances; "but we have all we want, and are as happy as possible," she added. "What can we wish for more, unless, indeed," she added in a graver tone, "it were hearts more grateful for all our blessings. Do you not think," inquired she, gazing tenderly upon her infant, "do you not think that my little Harry is very like his father? Oh, that he may prove like him in all things!" was her half-uttered ejaculation, while a large tear-drop fell unconsciously upon the sleeping babe.

My glance wandered instinctively from the quiet yet tasteful simplicity of Nina's morning attire to the well-filled bookcase, and to the many ornamental objects which imparted an air of home-like elegance to the otherwise dingy apartment. She seemed intuitively to guess the current of my thoughts, for immediately afterwards, she said, "You do not know, my dear friend, how often since my marriage I have thought over your kind hints on the subject of domestic expenditure."

"I was not aware I had ever given you any lectures on economy," was my rejoinder.

"Do you not remember," asked she, "having quoted to me a saying of Sydney Smith's, as to the right mode of making a small income go far?—'Before making any purchase, first ask yourself whether you want it, and secondly, whether you can do without it.'

"I found it at first a hard lesson" added she, smiling, "but have now learned that I can be quite as happy without those superfluities which I once deemed necessities of life."

This first glimpse of Nina in her own house gave me, I need scarcely say, the happy conviction that the sunshine of her wedding day had lived on through her wedded life, nor could I bear away with me any regret that my young friend had

committed the imprudence of making a "*poor match.*"

My latest glimpse at Nina was at a very recent period, during a visit to London, when I found her located in a new and very elegant home in Belgravia. Her husband was now a successful barrister, and was reaping richly the golden honours of his profession. She was surrounded by four lovely little children, was happy in her husband's love, and in her parents' society—but alas! the angel of death had entered beneath her roof and borne away her first-born, the little treasure who had lain nestling in her arms on my previous visit. The young mother's heart was deeply wounded by this bereavement, and, when I was alone with her, she gave vent to the tide of sorrow which oppressed her spirit—but on the entrance of her

husband, the wonted sunshine of her brow seemed to be recalled, and turning to a lighter subject, she spoke with pleasure of all the charms and comforts of her present home; and then, leaving the room for a moment, she returned with her little Nina in her arms, saying she wished to present to me her youngest born.

Mr. Greville looked tenderly, yet anxiously, at his wife as she left the room; and then, seating himself by my side, whilst his little ones clustered around him, he observed to me with a smile:

"You see, my dear madam, your friend Nina is still the 'sunbeam of the house.'"

Happy the woman who, like Nina Grey, whether in sorrow or in joy, whether beneath the parental roof or within her husband's house, may still be said to be the "sunbeam of the house."

THE CHRISTMAS VIOLET.

O LIST to yonder bird! that from his heart,
An unexpected fount of melody,
Sings to that lonely flower,
The Christmas violet!

A friendly note is heard to aid his song;
Cheerless and bare are meadow, wood, and hill;
Yet in that withered tree
He sits and warbles on,

As if the presence of a single flower
Were life, and spring, and sunshine to his heart!
What charm doth *she* possess,
To wake such music now?

Ah! the pure softness of her dark blue eye,
And fragrant breath rejoice him with the hope
That Nature is not dead,
That Spring will come again,

And, lavish-handed, fling o'er hill and dale
Blossoms as lovely as herself, and shed
Through all the awaking earth
Sunlight, and joy, and life.

O gentle bird! I would be still like thee;
Even though misfortune's hand, in future years,
Should wither, one by one,
The flowers of life, and cloud

With dark and threatening vapours all the sky;
Still may I, like to thee, with thankful heart,
Sing for the one sweet hope
Given at this blessed time;

And calmly wait for that unfading Spring,
Whose coming round all faithful souls shall shed
Immortal flowers of Heaven,
Eternal peace and love!

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RECIPES FROM FRANCATELLI'S "COOK'S GUIDE."

INFANTS' FOOD.

To one dessert-spoonful of Brown and Polson, mixed with a wineglassful of cold water, add half a pint of boiling water; stir over the fire for five minutes; sweeten to taste; if the infant is being brought up by the hand, this food should then be mixed with milk—not otherwise, as the use of two different milks would be injurious.

SAVOY SPONGE.

Put six yolks of eggs into a basin; add eight ounces of pounded sugar, a small pinch of salt, and a few drops of essence of lemon; work these together with a wooden spoon for ten minutes; then add four ounces of Brown and Polson's Corn Flour, and also the six whites whisked into a firm froth; these must be lightly incorporated; next, gently pour the batter into a mould or tin, which must have been previously very thinly spread smooth with clarified butter, and coated with finely sifted sugar; bake the cake in a very moderately-heated oven, and when done, turn it out of its mould.

MEHL-PRIE, OR GERMAN THICK CREAM.

To two ounces of Brown and Polson, add one pint of milk, two ounces of loaf sugar, and a few drops of vanilla; stir the whole over the fire for ten minutes, and pour it into custard cups; strew some ratafias over the surface, and serve with the supper tray.